



## Doing Business in Cote d'Ivoire

### 2008 Country Commercial Guide for U.S. Companies

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## Chapter 1: Doing Business In Cote d'Ivoire

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### Market Overview

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Cote d'Ivoire's market potential and commercial environment is perhaps the most attractive in West Africa outside of Nigeria, but its economic performance since the late 1990s has been heavily influenced by its ongoing political problems. The market potential of Cote d'Ivoire is substantial - it is the fifth largest economy in sub-Saharan Africa, retains a business infrastructure superior to many other countries in the region (despite degradation seen since the country was divided in two in 2002), and has been an industrial and transportation hub of the region since the early 1960s. At the same time, Cote d'Ivoire is only gradually emerging from its deep political crisis and the prospects of establishing a durable, long-lasting peace are, while encouraging, not yet certain.

This unstable political situation has had a negative effect on businesses, investment and the economic environment in general. Yet despite the uncertainty, businesses continue to function – many foreign companies are profitable, and most have been able to conduct their affairs since the initial outbreak of hostilities in September, 2002. Companies considering doing business in Cote d'Ivoire must weigh carefully the possibility of worthwhile returns and decide if the risk level is acceptable given the potential rewards.

#### General Market Overview & Trade Statistics:

- Cote d'Ivoire's economy grew at .9 percent in 2006, 1.8 in 2007 and is expected to rise to 3.8 in 2008. (Source: IMF and Ministry of Economy, latest actual data: 2006, data last updated: 09/2007). See [www.imf.org](http://www.imf.org)
- In 2008, total population was estimated at 19.03 million inhabitants with a demographic growth rate of 1.6 percent. (Source: National Statistical Office. Latest Actual Data 2007, Last Updated 2007) See [www.imf.org](http://www.imf.org), [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org).
- Agriculture represents 21 percent of the economy and engages approximately 60 percent of the population. Cocoa production was 1.1 million tons in 2006, the highest in the world, producing approximately \$1 billion in revenues. (Source: 2007 IMF staff estimates)
- Oil production is growing, supported by new offshore oil fields coming on-line. Oil and petroleum-related exports reached an estimated \$1.3 billion in 2007 (Source 2007 IMF staff estimates). Precise statistics for oil and gas production are difficult to determine, but according to the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy

Information Administration, oil production reached 90,000 barrels per day by the end of 2006. ([http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Cote\\_dIvoire/Oil.html](http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Cote_dIvoire/Oil.html))

- Trade represents 69 percent of GDP. The biggest exports are oil and petroleum products, cocoa, coffee, timber, rubber, cotton, palm oil, pineapples, bananas and cashew nuts. Major imports are consumer goods, basic foodstuffs, and capital goods. Cote d'Ivoire's major trading partners are France, Germany, the Netherlands, the U.S., Nigeria and Italy. (See [www.imf.org](http://www.imf.org) (Direction of Trade database); [www.eiu.com](http://www.eiu.com) (the Economist Intelligence Unit))

Other key statistical sources:

- Cote d'Ivoire National Institute of Statistics - <http://www.ins.ci/>
- West African Central Bank - <http://www.bceao.int/internet/bcweb.nsf/French.htm>
- World Bank "Cote d'Ivoire, Data and Statistics" – see country sheet at <http://www.worldbank.org>
- UN Development Program "Cote d'Ivoire Human Development Index" - [http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/country\\_fact\\_sheets/cty\\_fs\\_CIV.html](http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_CIV.html)
- World Bank "Cote d'Ivoire at a Glance" - [http://devdata.worldbank.org/AAG/civ\\_aag.pdf](http://devdata.worldbank.org/AAG/civ_aag.pdf)
- Ministry of Finance - <http://www.minecofin.gouv.ci/>
- National Treasury - <http://www.tresor.gov.ci/>

## Market Challenges

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Cote d'Ivoire is only now emerging from being politically, economically and administratively divided following an armed rebellion by groups known as the New Forces in September, 2002. In March 2007, President Gbagbo and New Forces leader Guillaume Soro signed the Ouagadougou Political Agreement (OPA), which established a transitional government with Soro as Prime Minister. The OPA calls for disarmament of rebel factions, reunification of the country, identification of the population, and elections in 2008. By the end of 2007, some progress had been made on provisions of the OPA and nearly 70 percent of the civil administration had returned to the parts of the country formerly under the control of the rebel forces.

Historically, there has been a lack of U.S. business interest reflecting a perceived French and European domination of the market due to French-based legal, commercial, and financial systems. Other longstanding barriers to U.S. business engagement in Cote d'Ivoire include:

- Use of French language, business practices, and technical standards. While a number of Ivoirian businesses are attempting to overcome the language barrier and work directly with U.S. companies, generally low levels of English language ability hamper those efforts.
- Higher freight rates and longer transit times from the United States than from Europe. Consolidated product packaging for the whole Francophone region gives francophone businesses an advantage.
- More favorable credit terms by European suppliers to local importers.
- High customs clearance costs, added to uncertain customs clearance times for inexperienced importers

- Uncertain legal protection due to a judicial system widely perceived to be prone to corruption.
- Limited Ivoirian purchasing power reduces the attractiveness of Cote d'Ivoire as a market for U.S.-made consumer goods.

## Market Opportunities

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Cote d'Ivoire is one of the largest economies in sub-Saharan Africa. Leading sectors for export and investment include:

- Building and construction equipment and material, new, used and remanufactured
- Automobile/automotive parts, new, used and remanufactured
- Plastic materials and resins
- Oil/gas field equipment and services
- Agricultural products and services
- Medical equipment and products
- Telecommunication services and equipment
- Paper and paper board (PAP)

The 2007 rise in the value of the Euro vis-à-vis the U.S. dollar has created substantial market opportunities for U.S. suppliers of goods and services since the franc CFA is tied to the Euro. Since September, 2006, the U.S. dollar has depreciated 16% versus the franc CFA, rendering U.S. goods and services 16% less expensive than most competition.

## Market Entry Strategy

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- Visiting: Exporters should visit Cote d'Ivoire to gain first-hand knowledge of the country.
- Using Agents: There are no laws requiring the retention of a local agent or distributor for a foreign company exporting to Côte d'Ivoire. However, it is strongly recommended that a company attempting to enter the market retain a representative resident in Côte d'Ivoire.
- Finding supplementary information/support: It is advisable that companies that decide to enter Cote d'Ivoire should consult with the U.S. Commercial Service and U.S. Department of State, particularly the U.S. Embassy in Abidjan (<http://usembassy.state.gov/abidjan/>) and the Foreign Commercial Service regional hub, based in Dakar (<http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica/en/>). These two entities can provide timely and current information on the business climate in Cote d'Ivoire.

- Consulting with Businesses Already Based in Cote d'Ivoire: Businesses looking to enter the Ivoirian market should contact the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Cote d'Ivoire. The Chamber can be reached at [amcham@ameritechfr.com](mailto:amcham@ameritechfr.com)

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## Chapter 2: Political and Economic Environment

For background information on the political and economic environment of the country, please click on the link below to the U.S. Department of State Background Notes.

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2846.htm>

It also maybe useful to visit the website of the U.S. Embassy in Abidjan, which can be found at:

<http://usembassy.state.gov/abidjan/>

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## Chapter 3: Selling U.S. Products and Services

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### Using an Agent or Distributor

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There are no laws requiring the retention of a local agent or distributor for a foreign company exporting to Côte d'Ivoire. However, it is recommended that a company attempting to enter the market retain a representative resident in Côte d'Ivoire. The exporter should be aware that in many established sectors of the economy there are one or two large distributors, manufacturers or agents who supply a majority of the market, while several smaller agents vie for niche markets. An exporter should assess the sales potential of all prospective partners in the market segment before settling on one.

An agent or distributor should possess a thorough understanding of the economy and be fluent in French. Both parties should agree on sales support (if any) to be provided as well as sales expectations. If the exported product requires servicing, qualified personnel and a reasonable inventory of spare parts must be considered. Exporters should be aware that agents and distributors commonly represent several product lines. There are no legal regulations requiring that agreements be exclusive, although a contract can stipulate exclusivity. The exporter should provide appropriate literature and documentation in French for better communication with potential customers. European competitors inevitably market their geographic proximity as a competitive advantage. For example, they are often able to provide a technician or a part on short notice. Failure to adequately address the issue of after-sales support has limited U.S. marketing success in Côte d'Ivoire.

A common problem for U.S. exporters is the failure to clarify terms and conditions for agents and distributors selling U.S. products. Written agreements clearly noting geographic regions to be covered, type of relationship (distributor or agent), exclusivity, payment terms for products or commissions, currency of payments, actions taken to address currency fluctuations, renewals of the agreement including specific parameters for performance and promotional activity,

provisions for termination of the relationship, licensing or protection of intellectual property rights, and provisions for dispute settlement are some of the key factors which should be addressed in a written agreement.

The U.S. Commercial Service can help U.S. companies locate reliable local agents and distributors through the [International Partner Search \(IPS\)](http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica/en/intlpartnersearch.html) (<http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica/en/intlpartnersearch.html>), which is a customized search for qualified local representatives, agents or distributors. More assistance can be provided through different programs including the [International Company Profile \(ICP\)](http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica/en/intlcomprofile.html), (<http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica/en/intlcomprofile.html>), the [Gold Key Service \(GKS\)](http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica/en/goldkeyservice.html) (<http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica/en/goldkeyservice.html>), the [Video Gold Key Matching Service](http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica/en/videoogs.html) (<http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica/en/videoogs.html>) and additional programs. All these programs include a regional (i.e. West and Central Africa) approach, which helps companies market their products and services in the sub-region. Information regarding these programs is available through the U.S. Commercial Service Export Assistance Centers located in cities throughout the United States.

## Establishing an Office

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The Ivoirian Investment Promotion Center (Centre de Promotion des Investissements en Côte d'Ivoire, or CEPICI) is active in promoting joint-venture operations and investment in Côte d'Ivoire (<http://www.cepici.ci/>). Acting as a one-stop shop, CEPICI can provide guidance to foreign investors and reduce the amount of time required for local business registration and administrative paperwork. CEPICI's activities include assistance with the necessary formalities of registering, incorporating, modifying or dissolving a local company. CEPICI helps facilitate the registration process by acting as an intermediary and "de facto" notary free of charge. However, once incorporated, companies must directly pay the notary used by CEPICI. CEPICI has also played a role in assisting the Ivoirian government in monitoring the state's ongoing privatization of parastatal firms program.

There are four common business forms adopted in Côte d'Ivoire. In any of these forms, the non-Ivoirian may hold 51 percent or more of the company's assets (exceptions to this rule occur on an ad hoc basis and are usually mandated by government decree). The most common forms adopted by businesses are:

- Joint Venture (Association et Participation): Joint ventures are allowed in Côte d'Ivoire.
- Branch of a Foreign Company (Succursale): Branches of foreign companies may not be established until they are registered with the Tribunal de Premiere Instance. Once registered, the branch is regarded as an Ivoirian judicial entity and is legally independent of the parent company.
- Limited Liability Company (Société à Responsabilité Limitée - SARL): All SARLs must have a minimum capital of CFAF 1,000,000 (approximately USD 2,000) and at least one shareholder. No share certificates are issued.
- Stock Corporations (Société Anonyme - SA): Stock corporations are required to have at least one shareholder. Each share must have a nominal value of at least CFAF 10,000 (approximately USD 20) and there is a minimum capital requirement of CFAF

10,000,000 (approximately USD 20,000) for closely-held SAs, and CFAF 100,000,000 for publicly traded companies. Directors' meetings are required on a regular basis. If a corporation has share capital below CFAF 2.5 billion (approximately USD 5 million), there is a stock registration tax of six-tenths of one percent of the value of the stock for the company. For corporations with capital valued above CFAF 2.5 billion, the registration tax rate is reduced.

Other business forms include regional offices, sole proprietorships, local agency or distributorship arrangements, various entities that are similar to limited and general partnerships, and state-owned or partially government-owned companies.

All business entities must register with the Commercial Registry within 30 days of commencement of activity. If the SARL or SA is the chosen form, the following must be filed with the Commercial Registry: a copy of the company by-laws, the minutes authorizing the establishment of the company (SA form only), and the name of the manager (SARL) or director (SA). Companies must submit an annual balance sheet and profit and loss accounts to the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

Business entities must file a Declaration of Commencement of Business with the Tax Department of the Ministry of Finance and the Economy (<http://www.minecofin.gouv.ci/>), the Labor Department (<http://www.emploi.gouv.ci/>) and the National Social Security Fund (<http://www.cnps.ci/>). If the entity contemplates the importation or exportation of goods or materials, it must register as an importer or exporter with the Department of External Trade of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Prior to establishing a business entity in Côte d'Ivoire, it is advisable to consult a local attorney.

Cote d'Ivoire Investment Code (in English and French):  
<http://www.panapress.com/cepici/law1.asp>

Useful Links:

Cote d'Ivoire Chamber of Commerce - <http://www.chamco-ci.org/>

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There is no official regulation on franchising in Cote d'Ivoire. Parties interested in franchising will need to conduct discussions with the government (The Ministry of Commerce) directly.

## **Direct Marketing**

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Direct marketing is used in Cote d'Ivoire, though it is not a common practice.

## **Joint Ventures/Licensing**

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Joint ventures are allowed in Côte d'Ivoire, but are not required corporate structures to do business. Please refer to the section "Establishing an Office" above.

## **Selling to the Government**

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In 2005, the Ministry of Finance introduced the following institutional changes to new public procurement code:

- The decentralization of operational functions to make ministerial departments, local governments and other government structures accountable for management of public resources.
- The creation of consultative public procurement commissions in charge of examining any irregularities.
- The reinforcement of public procurement coordination through the adaptation of regulations, training of officials, control of procedures, and the management of public procurement information and communication.
- The establishment of recourse mechanism to guarantee fair decisions at all levels of the procurement process.
- The reinforcement of public procurement control and auditing.

The Ivoirian Government periodically issues procurement tenders that are published in local newspapers and sometimes in international magazines and newspapers.

For projects financed by the multilateral lending institutions such as the World Bank or the AFDB, the Bureau National d'Etudes Techniques et de Développement (BNETD) (<http://www.bnetd.ci/bnetd/index.htm>) usually acts as an executing agency representing the ministry involved. There is a charge to purchase the bid documents, which are normally in French. Payment by the government is centralized through the Banque Nationale d'Investissement (BNI), which acts as the government's bank (<http://www.bni.ci>)

## **Distribution and Sales Channels**

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The principal methods of selling are via: wholesale and/or retail outlets (either in the local market or an established chain), a direct sales force, an agent or distributor, selling through established wholesalers or dealers, and selling direct to the government, cooperatives, and other indigenous organizations. Exporters should consider the requirements of the product and its potential market when choosing a distribution channel.

Most wholesale establishments and modern retail outlets are concentrated in Abidjan. These include company headquarters, regional offices, banking branches, insurance operations, brand-name supermarkets, car dealerships and specialty stores. Most owners of small shops and retailers are sole-proprietorships with limited management capability. Overall, the Lebanese community is strongly represented in retail operations and is well connected to the country-wide wholesale network.

The Ivoirian attitude toward conducting business with U.S. firms is positive but is complicated somewhat by language and cultural barriers. There is a general suspicion of large foreign businesses, despite (or perhaps because of the fact) that French-owned firms dominate the economy, constituting over 50 percent of the tax base (according to the French-Ivoirian Chamber of Commerce (<http://www.ccifci.org/>)). It is generally important, therefore, that U.S. companies establish and maintain a high level of personal contact within Côte d'Ivoire - it is difficult to mount a successful enterprise via telephone, fax or internet connections alone. Yet despite a differing business style, Ivoirians appreciate the role the U.S. plays in world affairs, welcome U.S. products and encourage U.S. investment in Côte d'Ivoire. Most Ivoirians businesses and businessmen expect business to be conducted with Ivoirian partners.

Côte d'Ivoire maintains historical, cultural and economic links with France and Europe. However, increasingly, young Ivoirians often prefer a North American university education over a European one. Younger generations are exposed to American culture (sports, films, technology, general consumer goods, and business). Continued exposure of the future workforce to U.S. culture, business and English will help to further U.S. business interests in the country. A number of institutions of higher education offering business and technical training in English have opened in the past several years (Canadian, U.S., other)

Ivoirians are extremely polite and rather formal; it is customary to greet everyone you meet. Even a long-term partner or business contact is usually greeted with an exchange of pleasantries, followed by a handshake and inquiries about one's health, family and relatives. While coming to the point directly is admired in American culture, Ivoirians tend to be more reserved and patient and in fact may find the aggressive "American style" disturbing. Ivoirians prefer regular, face-to-face contact; in fact, personal visits are warmly welcomed before conducting business. While visits may not be the most efficient method, it is generally regarded as the most effective method of handling new trade initiatives. For Ivoirians, trust in a business relationship is paramount and cannot be achieved sight unseen. The cornerstone of a successful business relationship is to adapt to a pace of business and life that is different than in the United States

The Lebanese community plays an important role in business in Côte d'Ivoire, particularly in retailing and wholesaling. As a group, they are very receptive to U.S. products and U.S. company representatives and are generally conversant in English. However, French is still their preferred language for business transactions.

Cote d'Ivoire's relatively good telecommunications infrastructure and growing Internet market have laid the grounds for further development of E-Commerce. Over the last three years, the number of computers connected to Internet has substantially increased, and this increase is expected to continue at a fast pace. The UNDP's World Development Indicators estimates that in 2005 1 percent of the population had access to the internet, up 4 fold from 2004. More recent anecdotal evidence indicates that internet penetration has continued to climb sharply as the

number of local Internet Service Providers has increased, leading to improvement of quality service and falling broadband rates for businesses and home users. The use of VOIP for international calls (in call centers and now ISPs are offering such services to home and business customers) has also tremendously increased and no special restrictions on this service have been imposed.

Banks also have started implementation of telephone, Internet and SMS banking in addition to some growing ATMs services. Cellular penetration was estimated at 12 percent in 2005 by the UNDP, and has continued to climb rapidly since then with the introduction of several new entrants to the market.

Effective August 3, 2006, the Central Bank “Banque Centrale des Etats de l’Afrique de l’Ouest”, BCEAO, established the inter-bank automated payment system to reduce delays in bank settlement operations. The relative newness of the electronic payment system has inhibited the swift E-commerce growth in the short term, and credit cards are still not widely used in Cote d’Ivoire.

## **Trade Promotion and Advertising**

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Since Côte d’Ivoire is a major commercial hub in sub-Sahara Africa, many advertising agencies and companies have positioned themselves in the Ivoirian market place, offering a variety of services, including publicity and sales promotion. Major advertising agencies include McCann Erickson, Ocean Olgivy, Vaoodoo Communications, and DC Productions. Some advertising agencies also offer marketing research and video production services as well.

Despite the political uncertainty in Cote d’Ivoire in the past several years, advertising activities have increased. During the same time period, new and more sophisticated advertising activities, support and materials have entered the market. Many new products and services are directed toward Internet users. Over the next few years, as internet penetration rates rise, this new segment of the advertising market is expected to grow substantially.

There are three regulatory bodies governing the media and advertising sectors. The first is the “Conseil National pour la Communication Audiovisuelle” (CNCA), which regulates the electronic media, particularly advertising and content issues. The “Conseil National pour la Presse” (CNP), is responsible for press-related issues, but has not been very active in the past several years. The “Conseil Supérieur de la Publicité” (CSP), the national council for advertising, registers new advertising and mass communication companies.

Advertising activity has become more sophisticated in recent years with the emergence of a variety of advertising products and services including large billboards, moving message signs, films, and video productions. In addition to local advertising, many international TV channels (cable TV stations such as Canal + Horizons, TV5, and TVRO antenna-broadcast programs (CNN, CFI, and others) provide advertising in the market. Also, the Ivoirian government has authorized new licenses for private radio and TV stations. To date, 22 commercial private radio stations are operating in the country as are 61 low-power, community radio stations. These developments will most likely favor an increase in advertising. The market for radio advertising is growing slowly. Ivoirian radio listeners have come to expect radio commercials with more sophistication and professionalism.

Currently, more than twenty regular daily and weekly news publications circulate in Côte d'Ivoire. The most widely-read publications include the daily "Fraternite Matin," a paper controlled by the Ivoirian government, and weeklies "Gbitch," a social satiric weekly magazine, and "Top Visage," a weekly specializing in show business and women's issues. Other international magazines published in French include "Jeune Afrique" and "Amina" which targets women. There is little readership for English-language international magazines or weeklies, although a few English-language newspapers and magazines are sold.

Ivoirians own more than 5 million television sets and 8 million radios. They are accustomed to consumer-oriented commercials and advertising and public service announcements. Contact information for Ivoirian media (print, radio, and TV) is listed in Chapter 9. Suppliers of imported products are expected to provide advertising and promotional support, particularly for new products or brands. Two commercial radio stations and two TV channels are common venues for advertisements, and posters, point of sales displays, coupons and billboards are widely used as well. Before showing a film, many local cinemas run promotional short films, typically promoting automobiles and tobacco products. Most TV commercials are produced locally, but there are some produced at company headquarters.

Small exhibitions are very often held in small convention centers in Abidjan or in major cities throughout the country. Companies participating in these trade events have the opportunity to promote their products and services to the public.

Packaging is important to the Ivoirian middle and upper class consumer. Colorful designs, blister packs and small, reusable containers appeal to the consumer. Extended shelf life in a humid climate is also an important requirement. However, cheaper products with minimal labeling are accepted here by more price conscious consumers as can be seen by several locally made products which are packaged in reconditioned bottles with minimal labeling.

Useful links:

Feature U.S. Exporters: <http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica/en/119.html>

Local Business Service Providers: <http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica/en/87.html>

## Pricing

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U.S. exporters will find that pricing in CFA Francs (CFAF), especially repeat sales for deliveries over a six to 12 month period, will provide a substantial commercial advantage over quoting prices in U.S. dollars. (Major U.S. banks can provide foreign exchange services allowing the exporter to purchase forward options in order to effectively remove foreign exchange risk from the transaction). CIF quotations to an Ivoirian port are more useful to Ivoirian buyers than ex-factory quotations. When calculating selling prices, U.S. businesses should compare their prices to competitors, and build into their cost structure an allowance for additional costs that often arise when selling into a developing market.

Payment via confirmed irrevocable letter of credit is preferred by U.S. exporters, particularly at the beginning of a commercial relationship. However, insistence on L/C payment terms may limit the rate of market penetration of the U.S. firm. European suppliers often effectively use seller financing in the Ivoirian market to accommodate customers and capture market share. Foreign competition often grants credits of 60 to 90 days for consumer goods and 24 months for

machinery and equipment. European banks often quote liberal terms and may discount paper for their exporters who are pursuing long-term credits. Competitive credit terms are an important factor in purchasing decisions and may be part of an effective marketing strategy in the Côte d'Ivoire.

U.S. exporters may offer competitive terms to buyers while effectively mitigating commercial and country risk by insuring foreign receivables. The Export Import Bank of the United States (Ex-Im Bank, <http://www.exim.gov>) will extend coverage for qualified buyers in the private sector of Côte d'Ivoire. Firms should contact the Ex-Im Bank or the nearest Export Assistance Center of the U.S. Department of Commerce (<http://trade.gov/cs/>) to obtain information on the financing of short- and medium-term transactions. Finance costs, based on U.S. rates, can usually be folded into the sale price and passed on to the buyer. Financing at U.S. rates is attractive to buyers in Côte d'Ivoire who often have to pay much higher rates to obtain local commercial credit. Many private firms offer insurance policies for foreign receivables in addition to Ex-Im Bank.

The U.S. Commercial Service can help exporters formulate sound credit policies applicable to local markets and credit information on individual Ivoirian firms through the [International Company Profile \(ICP\) program](http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica/en/intlpartnersearch.html) (<http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica/en/intlpartnersearch.html>). Information regarding this program is available through the U.S. Commercial Service Export Assistance Centers. The cost of one report is USD 520. Each report includes credit information on the foreign buyer and the recommendations of the U.S. Commercial Service concerning the suitability of the firm for sound business relationships.

## **Sales Service/Customer Support**

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Lack of after-sales support and services have been a principal reason for limited U.S. marketing success in Côte d'Ivoire. Support is especially critical for high-tech or heavy industrial equipment such as computer hardware and software, telecommunications and networking equipment, photocopiers, automobiles and construction equipment, and air conditioning/refrigeration units. French-language service manuals, frequent personnel training and a reasonable inventory of spare parts are also crucial.

## **Protecting Your Intellectual Property**

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### **Introduction**

Several general principles are important for effective management of intellectual property rights in Côte d'Ivoire. First, it is important to have an overall strategy to protect IPR. Second, IPR is protected differently in Côte d'Ivoire than in the U.S. Third, rights must be registered and enforced *in* Côte d'Ivoire, under local laws. Companies may wish to seek advice from local attorneys or IP consultants. The U.S. Commercial Service can often provide a list of local lawyers upon request.

It is vital that companies understand that intellectual property is primarily a private right and that the US government generally cannot enforce rights for private individuals in Côte d'Ivoire]. It is

the responsibility of the rights' holders to register, protect, and enforce their rights where relevant, retaining their own counsel and advisors. While the U.S. Government is willing to assist, there is little it can do if the rights holders have not taken these fundamental steps necessary to securing and enforcing their IPR in a timely fashion. Moreover, in many countries, rights holders who delay enforcing their rights on a mistaken belief that the USG can provide a political resolution to a legal problem may find that their rights have been eroded or abrogated due to doctrines such as statutes of limitations, laches, estoppel, or unreasonable delay in prosecuting a law suit. In no instance should USG advice be seen as a substitute for the obligation of a rights holder to promptly pursue its case.

It is always advisable to conduct due diligence on partners. Negotiate from the position of your partner and give your partner clear incentives to honor the contract. A good partner is an important ally in protecting IP rights. Keep an eye on your cost structure and reduce the margins (and the incentive) of would-be bad actors. Projects and sales in Cote d'Ivoire require constant attention. Work with legal counsel familiar with Cote d'Ivoire laws to create a solid contract that includes non-compete clauses, and confidentiality/non-disclosure provisions.

It is also recommended that small and medium-size companies understand the importance of working together with trade associations and organizations to support efforts to protect IPR and stop counterfeiting. There are a number of these organizations, both Cote d'Ivoire or U.S.-based. These include:

- The U.S. Chamber and local American Chambers of Commerce
- National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)
- International Intellectual Property Alliance (IIPA)
- International Trademark Association (INTA)
- The Coalition Against Counterfeiting and Piracy
- International Anti-Counterfeiting Coalition (IACC)
- Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA)
- Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO)

## IPR Resources

A wealth of information on protecting IPR is freely available to U.S. rights holders. Some excellent resources for companies regarding intellectual property include the following:

- For information about patent, trademark, or copyright issues -- including enforcement issues in the US and other countries -- call the STOP! Hotline: **1-866-999-HALT** or register at **[www.StopFakes.gov](http://www.StopFakes.gov)**.
- For more information about registering trademarks and patents (both in the U.S. as well as in foreign countries), contact the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) at: **1-800-786-9199**.
- For more information about registering for copyright protection in the US, contact the US Copyright Office at: **1-202-707-5959**.
- For US small and medium-size companies, the Department of Commerce offers a "SME IPR Advisory Program" available through the American Bar Association that provides one hour of free IPR legal advice for companies with concerns in Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Russia, and Thailand. For details and to register, visit: **[http://www.abanet.org/intlaw/intlproj/iprprogram\\_consultation.html](http://www.abanet.org/intlaw/intlproj/iprprogram_consultation.html)**
- For information on obtaining and enforcing intellectual property rights and market-specific IP Toolkits visit: **[www.StopFakes.gov](http://www.StopFakes.gov)** This site is linked to the USPTO website for



registering trademarks and patents (both in the U.S. as well as in foreign countries), the U.S. Customs & Border Protection website to record registered trademarks and copyrighted works (to assist customs in blocking imports of IPR-infringing products) and allows you to register for Webinars on protecting IPR.

- The U.S. Commerce Department has positioned IP attachés in key markets around the world. You can get contact information for the IP attaché who covers Cote d'Ivoire at: <http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica/en/contact.html>.

The Ivoirian Civil Code protects the acquisition and disposition of intellectual property rights. Until late 2007, however, protection for intellectual property was compromised by the lack of custom checks in porous Western and Northern borders due to the absence of government customs officials because of the country's political crisis. Enforcement of IPR in textiles, pharmaceuticals, visual and audio products and vehicle parts suffered as a result.

Cote d'Ivoire is a party to the Paris Convention, its 1958 revision, and the 1977 Bangui Agreement covering 16 Francophone African countries in the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI) which has been TRIPS compliant since 2002. Under OAPI, rights registered in one member country are valid for other member states. Patents are valid for ten years, with the possibility of two five-year extensions. Trademarks are valid for ten years and are renewable indefinitely. Copyrights are valid for 50 years.

In 2001, Ivoirian experts drafted a new law in an effort to bring Cote d'Ivoire into conformity with TRIPS. The draft law would add specific protection for computer programs, databases, and authors' rights with regard to rented films and videos. However, the National Assembly had not yet approved this legislation by the time of the outbreak of hostilities in September 2002, nor by December 2005, when the Assembly's mandate expired. Action on this new law will not likely happen until the Assembly's mandate is renewed through new legislative elections.

The government's Office of Industrial Property is charged with ensuring the protection of patents, trademarks, industrial designs, and commercial names. The office faces many challenges, including insufficient resources, uneven political will and corruption. As a result, enforcement of IPR is not consistent ineffective. Foreign products infringing on IPR, especially from East and South Asia, flood the Ivoirian market.

Until 2007, efforts by the government to combat piracy were modest. The Ivoirian Office of Author's Rights (BURIDA) put into effect a new sticker system in 2004 to prevent counterfeiting and protect audio, video, literary and artistic property rights in music and computer programs. However, in 2007, raids on centers where IPR infringing media is trafficked were stepped up, resulting in several sizeable seizures. In late 2007, BURIDA brokered an accord with producers of local musical content reducing retail prices by 66 percent in an innovative effort to undercut piracy.

## Due Diligence

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The U.S. Commercial Service liaison based in Dakar ([www.buyusa.gov/westafrica/fr/](http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica/fr/)), working with the U.S. Embassy in Abidjan (<http://www.usembassy.gov/abidjan/>) completes due diligence, in any sector, based on information provided by the U.S. companies. This service includes phone calls to local companies, and a possible site visit to the company to establish its

legitimacy. After a short investigation, U.S. clients receive a report on the actions taken and their outcomes by email or fax. The fee for this service is USD 50.

## Local Professional Services

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Customs Office: <http://www.douanes.ci>

Ivoirian Export Promotion Organization (APEX-CI) <http://www.apexci.org>

Banque Nationale d'Investissement (BNI): <http://www.bni.ci>

Banks in Cote d'Ivoire <http://www.africa-trade.ci/documentation/ci-banks.htm>

Shipping Companies <http://www.africa-trade.ci/documentation/ci-shipping.htm>

Hotels in Abidjan and Ivory Coast: <http://www.africa-trade.ci/documentation/ci-hotels.htm>

## Web Resources

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- The U.S. Department of Commerce Regional Office for Central and West Africa is your starting point for doing business in sub-Saharan Africa: [www.buyusa.gov/westafrica](http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica)
- Find Business Partners in West and Central Africa: <http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica/en/findbusinesspartners.html>
- Featured U.S. Exporters: <http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica/en/119.html>
- Local Business Service Providers: <http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica/en/87.html>
- Cote d'Ivoire Investment Code: <http://www.panapress.com/cepici/law1.asp>
- Côte d'Ivoire Investment Promotion Centre (CEPICI): <http://www.cepici.net>
- Ivoirian Export Promotion Organization (APEX-CI): <http://www.apexci.org>
- Customs Office: <http://www.douanes.ci>
- Bureau National d'Etudes et de Développement (BNETD): <http://www.bnetd.ci>
- Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Cote d'Ivoire: <http://www.cci-ci.org>
- Official Site of Côte d'Ivoire's Presidency: <http://www.presidence.ci/>
- Official Site of Cote d'Ivoire's Prime Minister - <http://www.premierministre.ci/>
- Banque Nationale d'Investissement (BNI): <http://www.bni.ci>
- Banks in Cote d'Ivoire: <http://www.africa-trade.ci/documentation/ci-banks.htm>
- Shipping Companies: <http://www.africa-trade.ci/documentation/ci-shipping.htm>
- Export-Import Bank: <http://www.exim.gov>
- Hotels in Abidjan and Ivory Coast: <http://www.africa-trade.ci/documentation/ci-hotels.htm>

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## Chapter 4: Leading Sectors for U.S. Export and Investment

- [Agricultural Sector](#)

### **Commercial Sectors**

- [Building and Construction Equipment and Material](#)
- [Automobile/Automotive Parts, Passenger Cars, New and Used, Trucks and Buses](#)
- [Plastic Materials and Resins](#)
- [Oil/Gas Field Equipment](#)
- [Agricultural Chemicals, Agricultural Machine and Equipment](#)
- [Telecommunications Services and Equipment](#)
- [Paper and Paper Board \(PAP\)](#)

## Building and Construction Equipment and Materials (BLD, CON)

### Overview

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USD Million	2006	2007	2008 (estimated)
Total Market Size	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Local Production	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Exports	59.6	N/A	N/A
Total Imports	106	N/A	N/A
Imports from the U.S.	0.4	N/A	N/A

(Source: Direction Generale des Douanes – Customs. 2007 information not yet available at the publication of this report)

THE ABOVE STATISTICS ARE UNOFFICIAL ESTIMATES.

Building and construction has been one of the sectors least-affected by the troubled political situation in effect since 2002, and has seen a noticeable upswing in the past 12-18 months. Telecommunications firms, including cellular telephone companies and Internet providers, have continued to make substantial investments in infrastructure, facilities and equipment. In the coming several years, the market is expected to grow given the large deficits in housing, stronger macroeconomic growth and foreign investment (from private and international public lending institutions) in the country's infrastructure in the context of the country's post-crisis reconstruction program gathers steam.

### Best Prospects/Services

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The housing market, road construction sector, and other large-scale infrastructure projects offer excellent opportunities to promote American-made building materials, heavy equipment, specialized project management tools and related services. U.S.-made large-scale air conditioning and refrigeration systems could do well in the Ivorian market. Construction equipment (new and remanufactured) and related spare parts could do very well in the Ivorian marketplace, particularly in light of the attractive USD-CFA exchange rate.

### Opportunities

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In addition to the building and construction sector, the Ivorian home remodeling market has the potential to grow significantly over the long term. Similarly, construction of a substantial portion of the upper-end housing market came to an abrupt halt in 2002; significant opportunities exist in furnishing equipment and housewares as these projects are restarted and brought to completion.

### Resources

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The U.S. Department of Commerce Regional Office for Central and West Africa:  
[www.buyusa.gov/westafrica](http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica)  
Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Cote d'Ivoire <http://www.chamco-ci.org>  
Bureau National d'Etudes et de Developpement (BNETD): <http://www.bnetd.ci>  
Ivoirian Customs Office: <http://www.douanes.ci>  
Center for the Promotion of Investments in Cote d'Ivoire : <http://www.cepici.ci/>

## Automobile/Automotive Parts, Passenger Cars, New and Used, Trucks and Buses (APS, AUT, TRK)

### Overview

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USD Million	2006	2007	2008 (estimated)
Total Market Size	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Local Production	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Exports	565	N/A	N/A
Total Imports	692	N/A	N/A
Imports from the U.S.	8.4	N/A	N/A

(Source: Direction Generale des Douanes – Customs. 2007 information not yet available at the publication of this report)

### THE ABOVE STATISTICS ARE UNOFFICIAL ESTIMATES

Although total imports in this sector had decreased during the 2002-2006 political crisis, the used automobile market has been growing for the last seven years and has reached a level of 38,308 units annually in 2006. Market liberalization measures related to used vehicles and weak credit availability for potential buyers of new cars are prime factors in the growth of the second-hand car market.

A very attractive segment of the market is the auto-spare parts and accessories market. Spare parts in Cote d'Ivoire are very expensive. The market for such products will grow quickly due to the age of the existing automobile fleet and growing fleet of used vehicles.

### Best Prospects/Services

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Best sales prospects include:

- Consumables: oil and air filters, wiper blades, rubber blades, hoses, gaskets and rings, engine parts, brake parts, exhaust system parts, car body parts
- Accessories: wheel covers, car/truck bed covers, car batteries, exterior accessory lights
- Auto security products: alarms and steering wheel locks
- Service equipment for electronic diagnosis, monitoring, testing and analyzing, wheel balancing, tire changing, oil changing
- Battery chargers, quick repair kits, tools, and paints

### Opportunities

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Excellent opportunities exist in importing U.S. second-hand cars and buses (no more than seven years age limit), spare parts, security/antitheft devices and safety devices.

### Resources

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The U.S. Department of Commerce Regional Office for Central and West Africa:  
[www.buyusa.gov/westafrica](http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica)  
Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Cote d'Ivoire <http://www.cci-ci.org>  
Bureau National d'Etudes et de Developpement (BNETD): <http://www.bnetd.ci>  
Ivoirian Customs Office: <http://www.douanes.ci>  
Center for the Promotion of Investments in Cote d'Ivoire : <http://www.cepici.ci/>

## Plastic Materials and Resins (PME, PMR)

### Overview

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USD Million	2006	2007	2008 (estimated)
Total Market Size	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Local Production	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Exports	59	N/A	N/A
Total Imports	199	N/A	N/A
Imports from the U.S.	21	N/A	N/A

(Source: Direction Generale des Douanes – Customs. 2007 information not yet available at the publication of this report)

THE ABOVE STATISTICS ARE UNOFFICIAL ESTIMATES

### Best Prospects/Services

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Plastic imports consist primarily of PVC, polyethylene, hard density polyethylene, and resins. Local manufacturers use these products to manufacture plastic consumer products, plastic garbage bags, plastic cups and containers for the food processing industry. In terms of market share, as of 2006, Saudi Arabia leads the market with 14% followed by France with 13.66%, the U.S. with 9.6%, South Korea with 4.91% and China with 3.26% of total imports.

### Opportunities

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Demand for plastics goods of all sorts has increased substantially in the past years

### Resources

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The U.S. Department of Commerce Regional Office for Central and West Africa:

[www.buyusa.gov/westafrica](http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica)

Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Cote d'Ivoire <http://www.cci-ci.org>

Bureau National d'Etudes et de Developpement (BNETD): <http://www.bnetd.ci>

Ivoirian Customs Office: <http://www.douanes.ci>

Center for the Promotion of Investments in Cote d'Ivoire : <http://www.cepici.ci/>

## Oil/Gas Field Equipment (OGM)

### Overview

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USD Million	2006	2007	2008 (estimated)
Total Market Size	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Local Production	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Exports	3,139	N/A	N/A
Total Imports	1,933	N/A	N/A
Imports from the U.S.	1.1	N/A	N/A

(Source: Direction Generale des Douanes – Customs. *2007 figures were not available at the publication of this report*)

### THE ABOVE STATISTICS ARE UNOFFICIAL ESTIMATES

Cote d'Ivoire has proven oil reserves estimated at 100 million barrels and gas reserves of 1 trillion cubic feet ([http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/country/country\\_energy\\_data.cfm?fips=IV](http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/country/country_energy_data.cfm?fips=IV)). It has the potential to become a medium-sized offshore oil producer with a developing upstream industry. The country is self-sufficient in producing refined petroleum products and is also a major supplier to the West African region. Ivoirian oil production grew to approximately 90,000 barrels per day at the end of 2006. Gas production reached 50 billion cubic feet per day by the end of 2006. Cote d'Ivoire is a net regional energy exporter. ([http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Cote\\_dIvoire/pdf.pdf](http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Cote_dIvoire/pdf.pdf))

Upstream development: The development of the oil sector was supported by the discovery of the new oil and gas fields, steady increases in regional electricity demand, rising production and higher international oil and gas prices.

It is advised that companies interested in exporting oil and gas production equipment to Cote d'Ivoire have their U.S. headquarters liaise with Ivoirian authorities first in order to take advantage of tax breaks available in the Ivoirian investment code.

Downstream: Oil and gas is bought through S.I.R. (Societe Ivoirienne de Raffinage), the only Ivoirian oil refinery and its associated storage company GESTOCL. The market for petroleum products is not liberalized, and companies wanting to market such products in Cote d'Ivoire must do so through S.I.R. Companies currently participating in the market include Texaco, Elf/TotalFina, LibyaOil (which purchased ExxonMobil's Cote d'Ivoire unit in early 2007) and about twenty-five local suppliers. The larger companies own shares in the refinery. Should the market for these products be fully liberalized, there will be significant opportunity for U.S. companies. Africa is one of the fastest growing areas of the world for downstream oil and gas consumption and margins are significant.

### Best Prospects/Services

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The largest opportunities for gas and oil are currently in exploration and production. Anecdotal reports indicate that deepwater sources hold additional promise.

## Opportunities

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The entire oil and gas equipment market represents a great opportunity for U.S. companies.

## Resources

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The U.S. Department of Commerce Regional Office for Central and West Africa is your starting point for doing business in sub-Saharan Africa: [www.buyusa.gov/westafrica](http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica)  
Bureau National d'Etudes et de Developpement (BNETD): <http://www.bnetd.ci>  
Ivoirian Customs Office: <http://www.douanes.ci>  
U.S. Energy Information Agency, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/>  
S.I.R. (Societe Ivoirienne de Raffinage), <http://www.sir.ci/>  
PETROCI, <http://www.petroci.ci/>  
Center for the Promotion of Investments in Cote d'Ivoire : <http://www.cepici.ci/>



## Agricultural Chemicals, Agricultural Machine and Equipment (AGC), (AGM)

### Overview

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USD Million	2006	2007	2008 (estimated)
Total Market Size	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Local Production	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Exports	3,159	N/A	N/A
Total Imports	91	N/A	N/A
Imports from the U.S.	7.8	N/A	N/A

(Source: Direction Generale des Douanes – Customs. *Figures for 2007 were not available at the publication of this report*)

THE ABOVE STATISTICS ARE UNOFFICIAL ESTIMATES

The primary end-users of agricultural chemical imports are Ivoirian farmers grouped in cooperatives and professional associations, as well as large companies involved in agro-industry.

### Best Prospects/Services

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Best sales prospects range from fertilizers to fungicides to orthophosphates, particularly in the cocoa production. Similarly, such products for use in palm, rubber, fruit, cashews, timber and cotton industries have high export potential for U.S. firms.

### Opportunities

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Modern fertilizers, pesticides and fungicides, equipment for their application and related services a great business opportunity.

### Resources

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Information about Cote d'Ivoire trade and business: <http://www.apex.ci/>

The U.S. Department of Commerce Regional Office for Central and West Africa is your starting point for doing business in sub-Saharan Africa: [www.buyusa.gov/westafrica](http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica)

The U.S. Department of Commerce Regional Office for Central and West Africa is your starting point for doing business in sub-Saharan Africa: [www.buyusa.gov/westafrica](http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica)

Bureau National d'Etudes et de Developpement (BNETD): <http://www.bnetd.ci>

Ivoirian Customs Office: <http://www.douanes.ci>

Association Nationale des Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles de Côte d'Ivoire, <http://www.anopaci.com/>

Center for the Promotion of Investments in Cote d'Ivoire : <http://www.cepici.ci/>

## Telecommunications Equipment

### Overview

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USD Million	2006	2007	2008 (estimated)
Total Market Size	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Local Production	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Exports	0.8	N/A	N/A
Total Imports	91.2	N/A	N/A
Imports from the U.S.	4.0	N/A	N/A

(Source: Direction Generale des Douanes – Customs. *Figures from 2007 were unavailable at the publication of this report*)

THE ABOVE STATISTICS ARE UNOFFICIAL ESTIMATES

The Ivoirian Telecommunication sector is one of the most developed in the West Africa region. As of 2005, it boasted a booming cellular phone sector with a density of 12 cell sets per one hundred inhabitants. Since then, two new cellular operators have entered the market and added 500,000 subscribers each, while existing operators report substantial increases in their customer bases. In the Internet market, there are two companies providing high speed internet access and competition is steadily driving down prices.

The only provider of fixed lines in the country is Cote d'Ivoire Telecom, the former state owned company sold to France Telecom in 1997. The company's monopoly on fixed line operations was scheduled to end in February 2004 but was extended. The draft telecommunications code, which ends Cote d'Ivoire Telecoms monopoly, was adopted by the Council of Ministers in January 2005 and is awaiting approval by the National Assembly (note that the election of a new National Assembly is required for approval of new legislation).

### Best Products/Services

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Best prospect for U.S. suppliers in Telecommunication sector include prepaid calling cards, Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) equipment and tools, Wireless Networks, Wi-Fi equipment, Wi-Max equipment, CDMA equipment, DSL equipment, GSM Solutions and Applications, Call Centers, Fiber Optic cables, Billing Solutions, Triple Play.

### Opportunities

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The Ivoirian Telecommunication market is growing for the full range of telecommunication equipment and components including copper and fiber optic cables, central office switches, cellular stations, data communications satellite, and microwave communication equipment.

### Resources

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The U.S. Department of Commerce Regional Office for Central and West Africa:  
[www.buyusa.gov/westafrica](http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica)  
Bureau National d'Etudes et de Developpement (BNETD): <http://www.bnetd.ci>  
Ivoirian Customs Office: <http://www.douanes.ci>  
Center for the Promotion of Investments in Cote d'Ivoire : <http://www.cepici.ci/>

## Paper and Particle Board (PAP)

### Overview

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USD Million	2006	2007	2008 (estimated)
Total Market Size	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Local Production	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Exports	44.9	N/A	N/A
Total Imports	89.1	N/A	N/A
Imports from the U.S.	5.2	N/A	N/A

(Source: Direction Generale des Douanes – Customs. *Note that figures from 2007 were unavailable at the publication of this report.*)

No paper mills produce raw paper material in Côte d'Ivoire. However, imported raw paper materials are transformed into toilet paper, notebooks, boxes, packages and other consumer items. The six leading suppliers as of 2006 were: France (USD 14 million, or 18 percent of total imports), Sweden (USD 11 million, or 12.7 percent of total imports), South Africa (USD 9.9 million, or 11 percent), Finland (USD 7 million, or 8 percent of total imports), Italy (USD 5.3 million, or 6 percent of total imports) and the U.S. (USD 5.2 million, or 5.9 percent of total imports).

### Best Products/Services

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Best prospects include paperboard used for cement bags, cardboard-grade paper for banana and pineapple packaging, photographic paper, and printing paper for newspapers, magazines, pulp and books. Distributors include companies specialized in photocopy paper, leading importers of miscellaneous goods and products, and printing companies.

### Opportunities

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Good opportunities exist in importing U.S. paper craft, granulated polyethylene, bleached craft and softwood pulp.

### Resources

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The U.S. Department of Commerce Regional Office for Central and West Africa:  
[www.buyusa.gov/westafrika](http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrika)

Bureau National d'Etudes et de Developpement (BNETD): <http://www.bnetd.ci>

Ivoirian Customs Office: <http://www.douanes.ci>

Center for the Promotion of Investments in Cote d'Ivoire : <http://www.cepici.ci/>

Outside of Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire remains the region's largest agricultural producer and processor, as well as the largest market for imports of many food and agricultural products. At 21 billion (2007), Cote d'Ivoire's GDP is huge by West African standards and agriculture accounts for nearly 27 percent of GDP. Cote d'Ivoire also remains an important transportation hub in the region. Commodity flows to and from Mali and Burkina Faso have normalized after five years of disruptions. Cote d'Ivoire is the world's largest producer of cocoa, and is also a major producer of coffee, cotton, rice, palm oil and products, rubber, tubers, beans, cashews, pineapples, bananas, mangoes and other tropical fruits. With the exception of rice, all of these products are exported - either in bulk, semi-processed or processed form. Cote d'Ivoire is a deficit country for cereal staples such as wheat and rice, and intermediate products such as milk powder. Meanwhile, higher-income consumers have created a significant market for high value products (HVPs) in Abidjan's extensive retail outlets.

The import market for food and agricultural products remains dominated by European, Asian and African suppliers, although many U.S. products can be found. Thailand, Pakistan, India and Vietnam dominate the market for rice. France dominates the market for wheat and high value processed products, although U.S. exports of wheat and rice are expected to increase in 2008. In the past five years, food and agricultural exports from the U.S. have averaged \$12.5 million per year. Market potential exists, however, for new entrants in the market for bulk, intermediate and consumer products.

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
Cote d'Ivoire's status as a major commercial hub in sub-Sahara Africa; sophistication of higher-income consumers; population is generally favorably inclined to U.S. goods.	Lack of U.S. interest due to the relatively small market size and unstable political environment; and French and Middle Eastern domination of the market.
Regular liner shipping from U.S. Gulf and East coast ports.	Higher freight rates and longer transit times from the U.S. than from Europe or the Middle East.
Cote d'Ivoire's Population of 18.5 million is growing at an annual rate of 2.0 percent per annum, and is relatively young.	The average per capita income is estimated at approximately \$950, or slightly about \$1600 in purchasing power parity.
Common external tariffs for imports and elimination of tariffs among the 8 countries of the WAEMU (the West African Economic and Monetary Union).	High business costs relative to neighboring African countries such as port processing and Customs duties. WAEMU also assesses value added tax (VAT) of 18%, which is applied on imports at the port of entry as a duty.
The Ivoirian consumer perceives U.S. products as being of high quality standards	The freight costs for products shipped from the U.S. are higher than those from the

and thus accepts U.S. food products.	EU, Asia or South Africa
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#### **Best Agricultural Product Prospects:**

1. Rice
2. Wheat
3. Corn
4. Vegetable oil
5. Soybeans/soybean meal
6. Variety Meats

#### **Best High Value Product Prospects:**

1. Milk (Liquid milk, skimmed and whole powdered milk)
2. Non alcoholic beverages (Tea, coffee, fruit drinks)
3. Bottled vegetable cooking oil
4. Margarine/butter
5. Pasta products
6. Canned fruits and vegetables
7. Beers and Wines
8. Spirits, liqueurs
9. Tomato puree/ketchup
10. Fruit preparations and juices
11. Bakery and other food Ingredients (Yeast & baking powder)
12. Confectionery products (candies, gums etc)
13. Snack foods (biscuits, cakes etc)
14. Mayonnaise and salad dressing
15. Spices and sauces including soy sauce
16. Condiments
17. Breakfast cereals

#### **Resources**

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Cote d'Ivoire Agricultural Exporter Guide (Update coming soon)

<http://www.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200410/146117905.pdf>

Foreign Agricultural Service –Attaché Reports

<http://www.fas.usda.gov/scripts/attacherep/default.asp>

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## **Chapter 5: Trade Regulations and Standards**

- [Import Tariffs](#)
- [Trade Barriers](#)
- [Import Requirements and Documentation](#)

- [U.S. Export Controls](#)
- [Temporary Entry](#)
- [Labeling and Marking Requirements](#)
- [Prohibited and Restricted Imports](#)
- [Customs Regulations and Contact Information](#)
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## Import Tariffs

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Côte d'Ivoire has a tariff structure composed of two basic customs charges: (1) a fiscal duty and (2) a customs duty. The maximum combined rate is 35 percent. There is also a statistical tax of 2.6 percent paid on all declarations, a single rate of value added tax (VAT) of 18 percent (2003 Finance law), special levies on meat and poultry imports and specific excise taxes on tobacco products and alcoholic beverages. Most of the duties are based on ad valorem rates which are imposed on the current export price from the country of sale or origin and any shipping and insurance expenses incurred. (C.I.F.) The method of value assessment in use is based on the Brussels Definition of Value (BDV).

Cote d'Ivoire is a member of the West African Economic and Monetary Union grouping countries such as Burkina Faso, Benin, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Togo, and Senegal. The customs regime is similar for all WAEMU member states (<http://www.uemoa.int/>). All third countries pay duty and tax on products whatever their point of entry based upon the Common External Tariff "CET" schedule.

The Common External Tariff Schedule (listed below) provides permanent and temporary duties and taxes:

### A. Permanent customs duty and taxes

Category	Duties	Products
0	0%	A limited list of essential social goods (books and drugs)
1	5%	Convenience goods, raw materials
2	10%	Inputs and semi-finished products
3	20%	Final consumption goods and other products

Permanent customs duty and taxes also include:

- Statistical fee: 1 percent of CIF value on goods except goods in warehouses, on duty free entry for re-export, in transit, donations and goods exonerated by international agreements.
- Community levy of solidarity, "PCS", applies to all imports (except those from WAEMU countries) at a single rate of 1 percent. In some cases, goods are exonerated from "PCS".
- ECOWAS community levy: 0.5 percent of the CIF value
- Special taxes on fish (20 percent), rice (between 5 and 10 percent), alcohol (45 percent), tobacco and cigarettes (between 30 and 35 percent), and oil products between 20 and 44 percent).

- VAT collected by customs office based on the single rate of 18 percent (applicable since the finance law of 2003). The tax computation includes the CIF value added to the entry duty and the statistical fee.

#### B. Temporary and Sliding Taxes

The seasonal, or temporary, import tax called “Taxe conjoncturelle à l’importation” protects local production of vegetables, rice, onion, potatoes when world prices drop and threaten local producers.

The sliding tax varies from 2.5 percent to 5 percent depending on the product category. It applies to imports of selected finished products such as matches, tomato paste, candies, and powdered milk that compete with local production.

West African Economic and Monetary Union: <http://www.uemoa.int/>

Ivoirian Customs Office: <http://www.douanes.ci>

### Trade Barriers

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Traditional barriers to U.S. exports and investment include:

- Limited data; and perceived French and European domination of the market due to French-based legal, commercial, and financial systems.
- Use of French language, business practices, and technical standards; the cost of producing sales collateral and packaging for the Francophone region. Many Ivoirian businesses are attempting to overcome the language barrier and work directly with U.S. companies.
- Higher freight rates and longer transit times between the United States and Cote d’Ivoire in comparison to connections with Europe.
- Favorable credit terms by European suppliers to local importers.
- Uncertain legal protection due to an inefficient, corrupt court system.
- Limited and costly financing resources for U.S. exporters and Ivoirian buyers.
- Limited Ivoirian purchasing power.

Some of these barriers are falling. Air and sea freight rates and transit times from the United States have decreased significantly over the past several years due to increase direct service by transportation providers as well as increase competition.

### Import Requirements and Documentation

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There are no import policies against U.S. companies. However, textile imports are subject to government authorization. For imports higher than USD 1,000 (CFAF 500,000), the importer must establish an anticipated import declaration “DAI” in the computerized system of customs clearance. The importer must collect it through the custom broker or the inspection company concerned by the shipment, COTECNA or BVCI.



Both import and export are subject to the acquisition of a registration number at the Department of Promotion of External Trade. Concerning the importer registration, the importer must show evidences of his/her registration to the trade register, the tax registration office as well as his/her fiscal status. However, the imports of cotton and 100 percent cotton products such as the "Wax and Resin" style of textile clothes most often used in traditional African clothing require an import license from the Department of Promotion of External Trade.

Documents for most goods shipped into Côte d'Ivoire include:

**Commercial Invoice:** Freight and two copies in French are required. There is no required form to be used, but all invoices must contain the names of the exporter and consignee, number and types of packages, marks and numbers on the packages, net and gross weights, C.I.F. value, terms of sale, and a thorough description of the merchandise. Note that the importer will usually need a signed "duplicate" invoice to speed the release of the imported goods from customs. This should be sent via air courier and arrive in Côte d'Ivoire prior to the arrival of the merchandise.

**Certificate of Origin:** Two certified copies are required.

**Packing List:** Packing list is not legally required but such lists are usually considered essential in accelerating the time required for customs clearance.

**Bill of Lading (or air waybill):** There are no regulations specifying content of a bill of lading. Importers should include clear marks of identification and the name and address of the consignee of the goods. It is important to ensure that shipping marks and numbers on bills of lading/ invoices, on the goods should correspond exactly.

**Pro-forma Invoice:** Persons wishing to import goods are required to attach six copies of this invoice to the application for an import license and/or the intent to import. A pro-forma invoice may also be required when presenting an application to Ivorian authorities to ship bonded goods through the country.

**Bureau Veritas Inspection Certificate:** Issued by the inspecting Bureau Veritas office at the point of origin and delivered to the importer in Abidjan

## U.S. Export Controls

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U.S. export licenses are not required to sell commercial goods and services in Cote d'Ivoire. Note, however, that Cote d'Ivoire remains under a UN arms embargo, imposed in 2002 at the outset of hostilities. Exporters should check with the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security on items which could be considered "dual use" or on items which could potentially violate the ban.

See additional information at the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security: <http://www.bis.doc.gov/index.htm>

## Temporary Entry

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A new or a temporary business may apply to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry for “Admission Temporaire”, or temporary entry, of their goods. The Ministry can also attribute this status to a company for goods that will be re-exported to other countries if a bonded warehouse is not used. Both are granted on a case-by-case basis.

Temporary admission of goods status is applied for goods that need to be processed and then re-exported. This is subject to the prior authorization of the customs office and requires a deposit.

Exceptional or occasional temporary admission: This includes repair, exhibitions, fairs, and testing.

Temporary admission of company material: This admission implies a partial custom taxation of the materials.

Many business travelers bring laptop computers into the country without difficulty. Traveling with desktop computers or other electronic equipment may pose a problem if the equipment is new or the quantity is such that it may be suspected as being brought into the country for resale. Business travelers should be prepared to demonstrate the business purpose of the equipment, and may want to consider requesting temporary entry permission for expensive equipment.

## **Labeling and Marking Requirements**

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In addition to the requirements described under import/export documentation, all packages containing U.S. produced merchandise must be clearly labeled “MADE IN THE U.S.A.” or they will not be allowed to enter the country.

For high-tech equipment, (e.g. telecommunications equipment, photocopiers, computer hardware and software) French-language keyboards, symbols, instruction manuals, operating systems and applications software are critical to the success of a product. Do not assume the user is a native English speaker. The equipment must be adapted to run as specified by European electrical and metric standards.

Consumer product labels, generally, must be in French for a product to be of interest to importers and consumers. Manufactured food products must be labeled in French and must have an expiration date. Health officials will often interpret the date of manufacture as an expiration date, if one does not appear on the label, and deny entry to the product. Therefore, it is best to include both dates.

## **Prohibited and Restricted Imports**

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The Ivoirian government has liberalized the importation of goods and services. There are no quotas and importers do not need prior authorization or import licenses for the vast majority of products.

Exceptions include:

- Several types of textile products are subject to authorization requirements by the Ministry of Commerce's Department of External Trade.
- Petroleum products, subject to prior authorization from the Ministry of Mining and Energy
- Livestock and animal products (including hides and skins), subject to prior authorization from the Ministry Agriculture.

## Customs Regulations and Contact Information

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There are no restrictions on imports and exports.

Payment for import duties and taxes must be made within 20 days. Interest is added in cases of delay of payment.

The average time of customs clearance depends on the type of goods being imported. For the "green circuit" (most products) the clearance time varies from 10 minutes to 24-48 hours. For the "red circuit" (products that require additional inspection), the clearance lasts about 1 week. The "white circuit" provides a quicker custom clearance but this is granted to businesses that have established professional and custom records.

Contact information:

Direction Generale des Douanes

BP V 25 Abidjan

Tel: (225) 20228553

Fax: (225) 20321070

<http://www.douanes.ci/>

## Standards

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- [Product Certification](#)
- [Accreditation](#)
- [Publication of Technical Regulations](#)
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## Overview

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The national standard and certification agency, Cote d'Ivoire Normalisation (CODINORM, see [http://www.iso.org/iso/about/iso\\_members/](http://www.iso.org/iso/about/iso_members/)), is a non-profit body created in September 1992 by the private sector with the government of Cote d'Ivoire's authorization. CODINORM provides standards for business development, risk prevention, health, fair commercial transactions and consumer protection.

## Standards Organizations

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CODINORM contracted two companies, the French firm Bureau Veritas Cote d'Ivoire (BVCI), and the Swiss firm, COTECNA Inspection Ltd, to undertake all qualitative and quantitative checks on goods shipped to or through Ivoirian customs.

### **NIST Notify U.S. Service**

Member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) to report to the WTO all proposed technical regulations that could affect trade with other Member countries. **Notify U.S.** is a free, web-based e-mail subscription service that offers an opportunity to review and comment on proposed foreign technical regulations that can affect your access to international markets. Register online at Internet URL: <http://www.nist.gov/notifyus/>

## Conformity Assessment

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Bureau Veritas handles the import inspection duties in Côte d'Ivoire for general merchandise. COTECNA Inspection Ltd performs services related to temporary importation, and exportation of petroleum products and forestry products.

All goods entering Côte d'Ivoire with an FOB value in excess of USD 3,000 or CFAF 1.5 million must be inspected by the inspection company at the point of origin to ensure that invoice valuation is consistent with the goods actually shipped. An inspection certificate is then used as the basis for customs valuation. Exporters should note that the inspection process is triggered by the local (Ivoirian) importer when he/she files a declaration of intent to import, also known as a DAI (Declaration Anticipée d'Importation).

The fee charged by BVCI for inspection services is 0.75 percent of the FOB value of the merchandise to supply on the market. COTECNA receives 1.05 percent of the FOB value of merchandises, 0.8 percent for oil and 1 percent for woods before export.

Since June 2, 2003, a certificate of conformity for the supply of some products is required. For foreign exporters, the Center of Export Relations of the Bureau Veritas group is responsible for issuing the certificate of conformity. For local companies, Bureau Veritas issues a certificate of product compliance during its bi-quarterly inspections. All exporters to Cote d'Ivoire must have a certificate of conformity for the purpose of custom clearance.

## Product Certification

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CODINORM requires that all products made in Cote d'Ivoire must demonstrate proof of compliance with applicable laws and norms. Specifically, "NI" labeling, "Norme Ivoirienne," or a certificate of compliance delivered by a certification product body accredited on the basis of international standard (such as ISO/CEI 65 OR EN 45011) is required. A growing number of companies have become ISO/9000 certified

For further information, please contact:  
Bureau Veritas Cote d'Ivoire Conformite  
01 BP 1453 Abidjan 01  
telephone:225 20211570/20312500  
Fax:225 20227715

### **Accreditation**

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CODINORM accredits testing laboratories authorized to operate in Cote d'Ivoire.

### **Publication of Technical Regulations**

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CODINORM grants approval for and disseminates GOCI information on standards.

For further information, please contact:  
Cote d'Ivoire Normalisation  
01 BP 1872 Abidjan 01  
Tel: 225 20 21 55 12  
Fax: 225 20 21 25 60

### **Labeling and Marking**

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In addition to the requirements described under the import/export documentation section, all packages containing U.S. produced merchandise must be clearly labeled "MADE IN THE U.S.A." or they will not be allowed to enter the country.

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### **Contacts**

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telephone:225 20211570/20312500  
Fax:225 20227715

Cote d'Ivoire Normalisation  
01 BP 1872 Abidjan 01  
Tel: 225 20 21 55 12  
Fax: 225 20 21 25 60

### **Trade Agreements**

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Cote d'Ivoire is member of the:

- Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS): groups both Anglophone and Francophone states of the region.
- West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU): includes the following member countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Mali, Togo, Benin, Niger, Guinea-Bissau, and Burkina-Faso. Under this treaty, Côte d'Ivoire has undertaken to coordinate its economic, financial, and structural policies with those of mostly Francophone partners in the region.
- Cotonou Convention: a trade and aid agreement between the European Union and 46 of Europe's former colonies and dependencies in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.
- OHADA (Organization pour l'Harmonization en Afrique du Droit des Affaires): an organization that harmonizes a broad range of legal systems which previously covered a wide disparity in business law, codes, rules, regulations and local conventions affecting business. The agreement creates a number of uniform acts and sets up organizations when necessary to implement the acts.

\*As of January 2005, Cote d'Ivoire lost its eligibility for benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA, <http://www.agoa.gov>)

## Web Resources

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African Growth and Opportunity Act: <http://www.agoa.gov>

OHADA (Organization pour l'Harmonization en Afrique du Droit des Affaires :

<http://www.ohada.org/>

West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU): <http://www.uemoa.int/index.htm>

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS): <http://www.ecowas.int/>

Center for the Promotion of Investments in Cote d'Ivoire : <http://www.cepici.ci/>

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## Chapter 6: Investment Climate

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### Openness to Foreign Investment

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Despite the ongoing political/economic crisis, the Ivoirian government actively encourages foreign investment through mergers, acquisitions, joint ventures, takeovers, or startups. There are no significant limits on foreign investment nor are there generally differences in treatment of foreign and national investors, either in terms of the level of foreign ownership or sector of investment. The government does not screen investments and has no overall economic and industrial strategy that discriminates against foreign-owned firms. The investment code was designed to boost private sector investment and increase national production. The code includes incentives, such as tax breaks, for larger investments and for investments outside of Abidjan and other urban industrial areas. There is also a Petroleum Investment Code and a Mining Investment Code, which were revised to encourage foreign investment in these sectors by making investments in them eligible for exemption from income tax and other taxes, and exemption from the value added tax on equipment, materials and the first consignment of spare parts, except when there are equivalent products either made in Cote d'Ivoire or available in country at similar cost.

As part of the 2006 new tax schedule, the GOCl introduced, on August 26, 2006, fiscal measures to reduce company tax burden and stimulate economic activity. These measures include:

-- The reduction of the corporate income tax from 35 to 27 percent, effective December 31, 2006

-- The awarding of three-year corporate income tax exemption and free tax registration for the relocation of companies that left the country as a result of the crisis.

Cote d'Ivoire has an investment promotion center called CEPICI, (Centre des Promotion des Investissements en Cote d'Ivoire located at <http://www.cepici.ci/>), which provides investment information and assistance for entrepreneurs interested in starting a business or foreign enterprises interested in investing in Cote d'Ivoire. CEPICI provides a "one-stop-shop" for investors, an outreach program to match opportunities with potential investors, and a public-private liaison program. CEPICI also maintains a file of projects seeking foreign investment.

Foreign companies are free to invest and list on the regional stock exchange (BRVM), which is based in Abidjan and is dominated by Ivoirian and French companies. With the inception of the regional exchange, the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) members established the Regional Council for Savings and Investment, a regional securities regulatory body.

In past privatizations, such as for management of the Port of Abidjan and for management of the electric and water companies, well-entrenched French companies won, which led to allegations of corruption on the part of losing investors. Bids are not always made public, the government sometimes simply chooses from among companies that have proactively contacted it about an investment opportunity rather than proceeding through a public bid process.

The government does not use tax, labor, environment, or health and safety laws to impede or distort investment. Well-entrenched companies historically have formed relationships with GOCI officials, which frequently influence the awarding of tenders. There is no sector where American investors have been formally refused the same treatment as other foreign investors.

There are some limitations on foreign investment worth noting. As a means to monitor foreign exchange flows, for example, the external finance and credit office of the Finance Ministry must approve investments from outside the West African Franc (FCFA) zone. Despite regulations designed to control land speculation, in urban areas, foreigners own significant amounts of land in Cote d'Ivoire. Free-hold tenure outside of urban areas, despite land reform, is difficult and most businesses opt for long-term leases.

There are sizable U.S. investments in offshore gas and oil exploration and production, petroleum product distribution, cocoa and coffee processing and shipping, and banking. The petroleum sector will continue to grow in 2007. There is a need for oil-servicing companies, oil exploration equipment and for experienced ex-patriot engineers and rig managers.

The oil and gas sector has particularly grown, supported by the development of new oil fields, a rising production and higher oil prices. The oil and gas sector has become Cote d'Ivoire's leading generator of revenue, pushing traditional leader cocoa into second place. Another area of commercial success is cellular phone service, which has seen the entry of a third mobile operator and a fourth is due to start operation soon; each company is largely financed by foreign capital.



The cocoa sector still remains significant to the economy. It contributes up to 40 percent of export revenues and 20 percent of government fiscal revenues. Because of this sector's critical importance to the Ivoirian economy, the government has expressed concern that foreign companies not dominate it. Although the government has liberalized the market, it limits the amount of cocoa that large foreign exporters can purchase and process to approximately 23% of the total harvest. The Ivoirian government has also established several private and public control agencies to regulate the industry. After two years of disruptive strikes, in the fall of 2004, the Ivoirian President established a "Blue Ribbon Commission" to review the coffee and cocoa sectors and recommend accelerated reforms. The commission's report, which was provided in May 2005, has not yet been made public. The World Bank and IMF have focused on the cocoa sector as a key economic bellweather and will likely insist that the Ivoirian government commit to a package of specific reforms in this sector if these institutions restart programs in Cote d'Ivoire.

## **Conversion and Transfer Policies**

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Cote d'Ivoire is a member of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), which uses the Franc CFA (FCFA), a convertible currency. The French Central Bank continues to hold the international reserves of WAMEU member states and maintains a fixed rate of 655.956 CFA to the Euro.

WAEMU has unified foreign exchange regulations. Under these regulations, there are no restrictions for transfers within the community and designated commercial banks are able to approve routine foreign exchange transactions inside the community. The transfer abroad of the proceeds of liquidation of foreign direct investments no longer requires prior government approval.

Despite the ability to freely transfer funds within the WAEMU zone, when Ivoirians and expatriate residents are traveling from Cote d'Ivoire to another WAEMU country, they must declare the amount of currency being carried out of the country. When traveling from Cote d'Ivoire to a destination other than another WAEMU country, Ivoirians and expatriate residents are prohibited from carrying an amount of currency greater than equivalent of two million CFA francs (approximately \$4,000). Larger amounts of require the approval of the Ministry of Finance, and must be in travelers or bank checks.

The Government must grant prior permission for investments coming into the WAEMU zone from outside and routinely does so. Once an investment is established and documented, the Government regularly approves remittances of dividends and/or repatriation of capital. The same holds true for requests for other sorts of transactions -- e.g., imports, licenses, and royalty fees.

Multi-national firms in Cote d'Ivoire have complained that temporary liquidity shortfalls sometimes occur in the banking system. These problems are particularly of concern during the main cocoa harvest when companies are trying to transfer large sums of

money in and out as cocoa is purchased and exported. Companies continue to complain that the Government is slow in approving currency conversions.

## **Expropriation and Compensation**

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Cote d'Ivoire's public expropriation law includes compensation provisions similar to those in the United States. Historically, expropriation has not been an issue in Cote d'Ivoire and the Embassy is not aware of any cases of government expropriation of private property.

Private expropriation as a means to force settlement of contractual or investment disputes has continued to be a problem, particularly for American investors in recent years. Investors should be aware that local individuals or local companies using what appear to be spurious court decisions have challenged the ownership of some foreign companies in recent years. On occasion the Government has blocked the bank accounts of U.S. and other foreign companies because of ownership and tax disputes. Corruption in the judicial system and security services has resulted in poor enforcement of private property rights, particularly when the expropriated entity is foreign held and the expropriator is Ivoirian or is a long-term French or Lebanese resident.

## **Dispute Settlement**

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The judicial system is dysfunctional and in need of reform. Enforcement of contract rights is often time-consuming and expensive as court cases move slowly. Judges sometimes fail to base their decisions on the legal or contractual merits of the case and tend to rule against foreign investors in favor of entrenched interests. In addition, cases are often endlessly postponed and appealed again and again, moving from court to court, in some cases for decades. It is widely believed that magistrates are sometimes subject to political or financial influence. Some investors stipulate in contracts that disputes must be settled in the international commercial arbitration court in Paris or the Hague. However, even if stipulated in the contract, international or regional arbitration decisions are sometimes not honored by local courts.

Given that the average time from filing to resolution of a contract dispute is eight years, in 1999, the Government established an arbitration tribunal for businesses to settle commercial disputes without going to court. The arbitration court is supposed to provide alternative modes of conflict resolution including arbitration, conciliation, mediation and expertise.

In July 2004, the business community welcomed revision of the Board to include participation of local chambers of commerce. The business community was also pleased at the Board's ability to more quickly enforce awards. However, use of the Board, in lieu of the court system has been limited: in the past six years, the Arbitration

Board has heard only 55 cases (10 in 2006). In addition to its local arbitration board, Cote d'Ivoire is a member of the International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes. There is also the Abidjan-based Joint Court of Justice and Arbitration as an alternative means of solving contractual disputes.

There is political consensus on the need to reform the judicial system. However, in 2006, the Ivoirian government remained preoccupied with the ongoing political crisis and many other legislative initiatives, including judicial reform, remained on the back burner. Reform efforts are likely to continue to languish until after the next presidential elections, currently scheduled to take place in 2008. Under pending reform plans, the GOCI would dismantle the Supreme Court, and divide its authority among several independent institutions. The current Judicial Chamber of the Supreme Court would become the High Appeals Court (Cour de Cassation). It would handle civil, penal, social, and labor cases when it deems that a lower court did not adequately apply the law. The current Administrative Chamber of the Supreme Court would become the Council of State (Conseil d'Etat), which would hear cases involving the State or public authorities or cases against the Government. The current Account Chamber of the Supreme Court will become a separate and independent Account Court (Cour de Comptes), examining the accounts of the State and of local government, and hearing financial cases.

Further reform plans call for deciding more cases by three-judge panels, instead of by a single judge; publishing decisions more quickly; enhancing computerization in the court system; training judges in commercial law; and increasing the number of appeals courts to reduce the backlog of commercial cases.

Cote d'Ivoire has both commercial and bankruptcy laws that address liquidation of business liabilities. The Uniform Acts for the Organization and Harmonization of Business Law (OHADA) is a collection of uniform laws on bankruptcy, debt collections, and the rules governing business transactions. The OHADA permits three different types of bankruptcy liquidation: an ordered suspension of payment to permit a negotiated settlement, an ordered suspension of payment to permit restructuring of the company, similar to Chapter 11, and the complete liquidation of assets, similar to Chapter 7. Creditors' rights, irrespective of nationality, are protected equally by the Act. Monetary judgments devolving from a bankruptcy are usually paid out in local currency.

## **Performance Requirements and Incentives**

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Cote d'Ivoire does not maintain any regulations inconsistent with WTO Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMS). There are no general performance requirements applied to investments, nor does the Government or the investment authority generally place conditions on location, local content, equity ownership, import substitution, export requirements, host country employment, technology transfer, or local financing. Cellular telephone operating companies must meet technology and performance requirements to maintain their licenses. The Investment Code, the Petroleum Code, and the Mining Code define the incentives available to new investors in Cote d'Ivoire (see section A.1. above).

Foreign investors generally have access to all forms of remunerative activity on terms equal to the terms enjoyed by Ivoirians. The government encourages foreign investment in the privatization of state-owned and parastatal firms, though in most cases the state reserves an equity stake in the new company.

Under its previous IMF Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility, the government committed to privatizing 30 parastatal enterprises by the end of 2003. While some privatizations occurred, the government has yet to sell the majority of its shares in a major local bank, a cotton company, and sugar company, and its remaining shares in the telecommunications company. Plans to complete these privatizations are likely to remain on hold until after the 2006 elections.

In January 2005, the Council of Ministers approved measures to liberalize the telecommunications sector, which had been postponed since February 2004. The legislation remains blocked in the National Assembly which lost its mandate in 2005. For the time being, the Ivoirian regulatory agency continues to function under the authority granted to it by the 1995 telecommunications code. The new rules will end France Telecom's fixed-line monopoly through its subsidiary, Cote d'Ivoire Telecom. A new regulatory agency would also be created to manage the fully competitive market.

Banks and insurance companies are subject to licensing requirements, but there are no restrictions aimed at limiting foreign ownership or the establishment of subsidiaries of foreign companies in this sector. There are no restrictions on foreign investment in computer services, or education and training services. However, there are restrictions on foreign investment in the health sector, law and accounting firms, and travel agencies. Investments in these sectors are subject to prior approval, require association with an Ivoirian partner (s), and appropriate licenses. Foreign companies operate successfully in all these service sectors.

The Ivoirian Civil Code protects the acquisition and disposition of intellectual property rights. Legal protection for intellectual property may fall short of TRIPS standards due to uneven law enforcement and the lack of custom checks in porous borders, which do not allow law enforcement action on trade of counterfeit products in the textile, pharmaceutical and vehicle parts areas. Cote d'Ivoire is a party to the Paris Convention, its 1958 revision, and the 1977 Bangui Agreement covering 16 Francophone African countries in the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI), which has been TRIPS compliant since 2002. Under OAPI, rights registered in one member country are valid for other member states. Patents are valid for ten years, with the possibility of two five-year extensions. Trademarks are valid for ten years and are renewable indefinitely. Copyrights are valid for 50 years.

In 2001, Ivorian experts drafted a new law in an effort to bring Cote d'Ivoire into conformity with TRIPS. The new law adds specific protection for computer programs, databases, and extension of author's rights with regard to rented films and videos. However, the National Assembly has not yet approved this legislation by the time it lost its mandate in 2005.

The government's Office of Industrial Property is charged with ensuring the protection of patents, trademarks, industrial designs, and commercial names. The office faces many challenges, including insufficient resources political will and the distraction of the ongoing political crisis. As a result, enforcement of IPR is largely ineffective. Foreign companies, especially from East and South Asia, flood the Ivoirian market with all types of counterfeit goods. Government efforts to combat piracy are modest. The Ivoirian Office of Author's Rights (BURIDA), put into effect a new sticker system in January 2004 to prevent counterfeiting and protect audio, video, literary and artistic property rights in music and computer programs. BURIDA's operations remain hampered by a long-running dispute between the management and the board over policy and leadership issues. To resolve the crisis at BURIDA, on March 15, 2006 the Minister of Culture took a ministerial bylaw to establish a temporary administration and a commission to study and propose a global reform of this organization. Despite these challenges, it does help to promote IPR enforcement with lawyers and magistrates.

Outside of urban areas, private individuals or entities usually cannot obtain freehold tenure because the traditional property rights of villages and ethnic groups prevent the land from being sold. In urban areas where land is not held as a "tenancy in common" by a tribal or village head but is considered to be owned individually, it can still be difficult to obtain a free-hold deed to a property even years after a closing. For that reason, most individuals and business tend to sign long-term leases. Although the legal system recognizes the right to contract for leaseholds in both urban and rural areas, there is not a clear understanding by traditional tribal land-owners of property rights. This complicates the enforcement of property rights in rural areas. In addition, because free-hold tenure by individuals is not generally permitted in rural areas, would-be borrowers often have difficulty using real estate as collateral for loans. Even in urban settings, in general, the mortgage market is not well developed. As part of the legislative reforms mandated by the Linas-Marcoussis Peace agreement, in July 2004 the National Assembly adopted amendments to the law on rural-land ownership. This new law provides very limited free-hold ownership for rural lands, which had been traditionally held as a tenancy in common by villages. Rights are only protected, however, if the owner can document proof of ownership through an assignment deed or purchase contract.

## **Transparency of Regulatory System**

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The Government has taken some steps toward encouraging a more transparent and competitive economic environment. In addition, the IMF, World Bank, European Union, and other large donors have pushed the Government to take further steps towards reforms by placing conditions on future loans and grants. A centralized office of public bids in the Finance Ministry was designed to ensure compliance with international bidding practices by providing a neutral body to make bidding decisions in a transparent

and objective fashion based on clear criteria. In 2005, the Ministry of Finance introduced institutional changes in the new public procurement code. They are:

- The decentralization of operational functions to make ministerial departments, local governments and other government structures accountable for the management of public resources
- The creation of consultative public procurement commissions in charge of examining extraordinary decisions
- The reinforcement of public procurement coordination through new regulations, training, procedural controls and more open and transparent communication with the interested public
- The establishment of an appeals mechanism
- The reinforcement of auditing in the public procurement process

In addition to the office of public bids, there is also an Inspector General's office and regulatory bodies for the liberalized electricity and telecommunications sectors. Customs and other officials can be obstructive for all businesses operating in Cote d'Ivoire.

Several years ago, under pressure from the Bretton Woods institutions, the GOCI dissolved the cocoa and coffee marketing board and replaced it with a supposedly more market-oriented system regulated by several private and public institutions with producer, industry, and government representation. The results of the sector's liberalization are decidedly mixed. The new agencies tasked with the control and regulation of the sector have worked neither efficiently nor transparently and have become the subject of controversy regarding their fiduciary mismanagement. In the fall of 2004, President Gbagbo bowed to pressure from the international community and the planters, and created a steering committee to review the coffee and cocoa sectors and recommend reforms. The Committee submitted its report to the President in 2005, but the results have not been made public. The World Bank and IMF will likely include reform of the cocoa sector as requirements for any future lending.

The Finance Ministry has been known to change tax regimes overnight via ministerial decree, rather than working through the Council of Ministers and the National Assembly. The government sometimes levies large tax bills, which companies say have little basis in law or standard accounting practices. It then negotiates a lower bill with the company.

## **Efficient Capital Markets and Portfolio Investment**

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Cote d'Ivoire commercial banking sector is sound, despite the closure of 50 bank branches in the Northern, Center and Western zones.



Due to the financial risk associated with long-term loans because of the ongoing political/economic crisis, banks have begun to limit funding to the private sector, particularly for small and medium size enterprises. Banks continue to offer short-term loans. Banks generally make lending and investment decisions on business criteria. Portfolio investment is emerging. Government and private bond issuances are available for purchase by individuals or companies. The Regional Council for Savings Investments and regulates the WAEMU securities exchanges market. Government policies generally encourage the free flow of capital. Aside from restrictions previously listed, there are no private sector or government efforts to restrict foreign investment, participation, or control of local industry. Credit for business expansion is difficult to obtain. The government relinquished its interest in smaller banks and retains only a small minority share in several large banks.

At the end of 2005, total assets of the 17 banks and two credit institutions were FCFA 2.0 trillion (about USD 4.0 billion), an increase of 1.7 percent from 2004 figures.

Ivoirian accounting systems are well developed and approach international norms. A WAEMU-wide accounting system, under which all member countries follow the same accounting rules, is firmly in place.

The FCFA exchange rate is pegged to the Euro at 655.957 FCFA to one Euro. As a consequence, the FCFA/USD rate fluctuates freely with the Euro/USD rate.

There is no evidence of “cross shareholding” and “stable shareholders” to restrict foreign investment through mergers and acquisitions in Cote d’Ivoire.

## **Political Violence**

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Politically motivated demonstrations and strikes by workers’ unions in the education, transport, banking and cocoa sectors have occurred and could continue to be potential sources of civil disturbance in 2007. None of these protests were directed against American or foreign businesses.

The after effects of the political violence in November 2004 are still being felt. Many of the more than 9,000 foreign nationals who fled have not returned, and many of the businesses that were destroyed by street mobs have not reopened. The Ivoirian government has not made good on its promise to compensate victims of the violence. Businesses that remain are installing additional security measures to protect their property and staff.

## **Corruption**

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Cote d'Ivoire signed the UN Anti-corruption Convention on December 10, 2003 but has not yet ratified it. The country is not a signatory to the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery. There are domestic laws and regulations to combat corruption but they are neither generally nor effectively enforced. Penalties can range from incarceration to

payment of civil fines. State employees can be convicted of either passive or active corruption or bribery in the performance of their duties. The law also punishes state employees who receive directly or indirectly benefit from private or parastatal companies related to contracts, markets or financial payment under their purview. Managers of companies who are complicit in the corrupting act are treated as accomplices.

Racketeering by security and defense forces is often denounced in the media and constantly receives wide attention from the authorities and the population. In 2005, security forces and police officials launched media advertisements to stop corruption. The ads entitled "that's enough" focused on citizens as the corrupters. There was a loud outcry from civil society and the ads were quickly pulled off the air. Sporadic unrest in the country has led to an increase in the number of police, military and gendarme checkpoints on the roads, and consequently an increase in the solicitation of bribes at these checkpoints. Transport companies have been particularly hard hit. Trucks moving cargo from the western agricultural belt to Abidjan and between Abidjan and the rebel-controlled Northern region range pay a total of \$100 to \$400 at the various checkpoints they must pass through, depending on the cargo. There are several governmental entities in charge of fighting corruption: the General Secretariat in charge of good governance, which has been changed into the Secretary of State to the Prime Minister for Good Governance, since the cabinet reshuffle in September 2006, the Board of State General Inspectors, and the Finance Ministry's Inspector General's Office. None have been effective in stamping out this growing problem. Neither Transparency International, nor any regional or local non-governmental "watchdog" organization operates in Cote d'Ivoire.

Many U.S. companies view corruption as an obstacle to investment in Cote d'Ivoire. Corruption has the greatest impact on judicial proceedings, contract awards, customs, and tax issues. It is common for judges to base their decisions on financial influence. Corruption and the ongoing political/economic crisis have affected the Ivorian government's ability to attract foreign investment. Transparency International's 2006 "corruption perception index" has ranked Cote d'Ivoire 153<sup>rd</sup> of 163 countries. Businesses have reported corruption at every level of the civil service. Stamps, copies, and an official act to register a birth, death, automobile, carry a supplemental "commission." If the commission is refused, the application is not processed. The size of the commission varies with the cost of the service or investment. Some U.S. investors have raised specific concerns about the rule of law and the government's ability to provide equal protection under the law. A poor record in enforcing the rule of law was one reason cited for the country's loss of eligibility for benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) at the beginning of 2005.

## **Bilateral Investment Agreements**

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There are no bilateral investment or taxation treaties between Cote d'Ivoire and the U.S.

## **OPIC and Other Investment Insurance Programs**

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OPIC insures several U.S. investments in Cote d'Ivoire although the overall exposure is relatively small. The African Project Development Facility (APDF) and the African Investment Program of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) may assist investors. Since 1999, OPIC has not issued any new investment insurance policies in Cote d'Ivoire.



Since 2003, OPIC has withdrawn its underwriting agreement for Cote d'Ivoire. Cote d'Ivoire is a member of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA).

## **Labor**

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The Constitution and the Labor Code grant all citizens, except members of the police and military, the right to form or join unions, and workers exercise these rights. Registration of a new union takes three months. Despite these protections, only a small percentage of the work force is actually organized, and most laborers work in the informal sector (i.e. small farms, small roadside stands, and urban workshops). Anti-union discrimination is prohibited. There have not been reports of anti-union discrimination, and as a consequence there have been no known prosecutions or convictions under this law. Unions were free to join international bodies, and the General Workers Union of Cote d'Ivoire (UGTCI) was affiliated with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. The Constitution additionally provides for collective bargaining, and the Labor Code grants all citizens, except members of the police and military services, the right to bargain collectively. Collective bargaining agreements were in effect in many major business enterprises and sectors of the civil service. In most cases in which wages were not established in direct negotiations between unions and employers, the Ministry of Employment and Civil Service established salaries by job categories. The Constitution and statutes provide for the right to strike, and the Government generally protects this right. However, the Labor Code requires a protracted series of negotiations and a six-day notification period before a strike may take place, making legal strikes difficult to organize.

On February 19, 2004, the Minister of Employment and Labor and the Minister of Economy and Finance signed a decree aimed at promoting national employment. This decree favors the employment of Ivoirians in private enterprises. The decree states that any position to be filled must be advertised for two months. If after two months no qualified Ivoirian is found, the employer is allowed to recruit a foreigner, provided that he informs the Administration of his plan for recruiting an Ivoirian to fill the position in the next two years. The foreign employee must be given a labor contract and must have a visa that costs the equivalent of a month's salary each year. Representatives of the West African Economic and Monetary Union harshly criticized the decree and claimed that it violated Article 91 of the West African Economic and Monetary Union Treaty, which permits the free movement of persons for employment within the union. In response to the criticism, the Minister released a statement to the press indicating that the decree was a guideline, not an obligation, and that it was not meant to discriminate against West Africans seeking employment in Cote d'Ivoire.

## **Foreign-Trade Zones/Free Ports**

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There are no free trade zones in Cote d'Ivoire. In August 2004, the Ivoirian government adopted a plan to create free trade zones for information technology and for biotechnology. This project is dormant. Another free trade zone project, which was planned for the port of San Pedro, also remains dormant. Bonded warehouses do exist, and bonded zones within factories are allowed. High port costs and maritime freight rates have inhibited the development of in-bond manufacturing or processing, and there are consequently no general foreign trade zones.

**Foreign Direct Investment inflow by Sector, 2006 (USD)**Sectors Investment Percentage

Food	20,754,610	13.09%
Mechanic, Iron	0	0.00%
& Steel Industry	1,112,183	0.70%
Health	2,444,917	1.54%
Tourism & Hotel	356,380	0.22%
Communication	117,843	0.07%
Agriculture	16,316	0.01%
Telecommunication	94,889,023	59.85%
Textile	18,147	0.01%
Service	2,257,452	1.42%
Training	302,405	0.19%
Plastics	2,389,454	1.51%
Chemical	1,383,685	0.87%
Wood	33,013	0.02%
Transport	8,450,418	5.33%
Mining	3,718,024	2.34%
Oil & Gas	19,722,242	12.44%
Glass	206,061	0.13%
Cosmetics	380,917	0.24%
Total	158,553,090	100.00%

Source: Ivoirian Investment Promotion Authority (CEPICI). Average exchange rate CFAF 500 per one USD.

**Foreign Direct Investment inflow by Country of Origin, 2006 (USD)**Countries Investment Percentage

France	4,312,401	3.35%
Netherlands	21,209,452	16.46%
Great Britain	186,413	0.14%
Lebanon*	1,211,232	0.94%
China	196,391	0.15%
India	522,521	0.41%
U.S.A	2,230,814	1.73%
Panama	4,017,078	3.12%
British Islands	29,208	0.02%
Senegal	242,107	0.19%
Togo	94,528,018	73.35%

Central African		
Republic	73,326	0.06%
Algeria	110,000	0.09%
Total	128,868,961	100.00%

Source: CEPICI. Table does not represent all the flow investments by origin.

Average exchange rate CFAF 500 per one USD.

\*CEPCI does not include investment from resident Lebanese in FDI figures

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Center for the Promotion of Investments in Cote d'Ivoire : <http://www.cepici.ci/>

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## Chapter 7: Trade and Project Financing

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- [How Does the Banking System Operate](#)
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### How Do I Get Paid (Methods of Payment)

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While traditional trade finance instruments such as letters of credit, collections, and funds transfer are available to the exporter, the associated fees are high compared to other regions. If a letter of credit is chosen, the exporter should require an irrevocable, confirmed letter of credit to ensure prompt, reliable payment.

The United State Department of Agriculture's (USDA) West Africa Regional GSM-102 Credit Guarantee Program provides access to financing for imports of agricultural products. The payment guarantee to the U.S. exporter is for a minimum of 90 days and a maximum of one year. The GSM-102 program is generally available only to high quality importers with a good credit history and substantial assets with the guarantor bank. In addition, USDA's regional Supplier Credit Guarantee Program offers a 65 percent guarantee for credit extended directly from a U.S. exporter to an importer.

### How Does the Banking System Operate

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Côte d'Ivoire is a member of the Communauté Financière Africaine, a financial grouping of Francophone African countries. Within that grouping, it belongs to the West African Monetary and Economic Union (WAEMU, <http://www.uemoa.int/index.htm>). The Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (BCEAO, <http://www.bceao.int/>) located in Dakar, is the central bank for WAEMU members. The currency issued by the BCEAO, the CFA Franc, is convertible against EURO at a rate of 655.957 CFA per EURO (<http://www.ecb.int/home/html/index.en.html>)

There are 17 commercial banks in operation in Côte d'Ivoire. Selected banks with their U.S. (or other foreign) correspondent banks are listed in Section 6 below. There is a regional stock exchange based in Abidjan (<http://www.brvm.org/>) and over 30 insurance companies. The African Development Bank (<http://www.afdb.org>) is temporarily headquartered in Tunis, with a small local staff remaining in Abidjan, after relocating from its permanent Abidjan headquarters in 2004 in the midst of civil strife. The World Bank (<http://www.worldbank.org>) and the International Monetary Fund (<http://www.imf.org>) also maintain regional offices.

Banking supervision for the WAEMU countries is the responsibility of the Banking Commission, headquartered in Abidjan (<http://www.bceao.int/>). The Governor of the regional central bank, the BCEAO, also serves as Chairman of the Banking Commission. The Commission also includes representatives of each member state and France, and eight independent members appointed by the member states.

## Foreign-Exchange Controls

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The Directorate of External Finance and Credit of the regional central bank (<http://www.bceao.int/>) administers exchange controls within Côte d'Ivoire. According to Ivoirian law, authorized banks or the Postal Administration must handle all exchange transactions relating to foreign countries. If an imported item has a value in excess of CFAF 500,000 the transaction must involve an Ivoirian bank. Transactions involving goods valued at less than this amount must be handled by an authorized Ivoirian bank if a financial transaction is to be undertaken before customs clearance. Import attestations allow importers to purchase any necessary foreign exchange, but no earlier than eight days before the scheduled shipment of the goods. All foreign exchange to be used for import payment must be purchased either on the date of settlement specified in the commercial contract, or at the time when the required down payment is made.

French franc-based transactions are the easiest and most practiced. Dollar-based transactions may take longer. The fees associated with processing exchange transactions are high and vary slightly between banks. Proof of an importing transaction is required to remit payments for imports denominated in other currencies.

## U.S. Banks and Local Correspondent Banks

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### Banks in Cote d'Ivoire

### Corresponding Banks

SGBCI	Société Générale (SocGen)
BIAO	Credit Commercial de France (CCF)
BICICI	BNP Paribas
SIB	Credit Lyonnais, NY
Citibank	Citibank
BHCI	None
Ecobank	Chase Manhattan, and Bankers Trust
Bank of Africa	None
HSBC Equator Bank	HSBC Group (Merchant banking, no retail operations in Côte d'Ivoire)
COBACI	Bank of Tokyo Mitsubishi, New York
Standard Chartered Bank	Standard, NY (U.K.-based Standard Chartered Bank opened a branch in Cote d'Ivoire in 2001)

VISA cards can be used to access cash at many major banks. Mastercard is less widely used, but is accepted at two banks.

Commercial lenders tend to rely more on collateral than on prospective income and cash flow. Financing is generally available for short-term (one year or less) private sector projects. Since the 1994 devaluation, inflation has remained substantially under control. Banks continue, however, to extend credit only to a limited group of borrowers--mostly large companies--who are deemed good credit risks. The current lending rate ranges from 15 to 17 percent. Medium to long-term infrastructure projects, even private-sector projects, are often financed by foreign aid programs, rather than by commercial banks. Lending by multilateral lending institutions such as the World Bank or the African Development Bank had been suspended until July, 2007, and as of the date of publication of this report, the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (<http://www.ifc.org>) had not resumed operations in Cote d'Ivoire.

Ex-Im Bank (<http://www.exim.gov>) financing is available for short and medium-term private sector transactions. Ex-Im Bank's Direct Loan Program offers foreign buyers medium and long-term loans for up to 85 percent of the contract price at fixed interest rates for the purchase of U.S. capital equipment.

For private sector projects, assistance from the U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC, <http://www.opic.gov>) and U.S. Trade and Development Agency (<http://www.ustda.gov>) are currently unavailable.

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Export-Import Bank of the United States: <http://www.exim.gov>

Country Limitation Schedule: [http://www.exim.gov/tools/country/country\\_limits.html](http://www.exim.gov/tools/country/country_limits.html)

OPIC: <http://www.opic.gov>

Trade and Development Agency: <http://www.tda.gov/>

SBA's Office of International Trade: <http://www.sba.gov/oit/>

USDA Commodity Credit Corporation: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ccg/default.htm>

U.S. Agency for International Development: <http://www.usaid.gov>

World Bank: <http://www.worldbank.org>

International Finance Corporation: <http://ifc.org>

African Development Bank: <http://www.afdb.org>

Multilateral investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA): <http://www.miga.org>

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## Chapter 8: Business Travel

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### Business Customs

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French is the official language of Côte d'Ivoire. Business correspondence, catalogs and advertising materials prepared in French are essential and readily understood by potential buyers. Business cards or "cartes de visite" are widely used. Members of the expatriate community or those who have received their schooling abroad frequently use academic titles and degrees. U.S. business people ordinarily use their firm's name and their title translated into French.

As a rule, business customs in Côte d'Ivoire are similar to but perhaps more formal than customs in the United States. Ivoirian managers in large commercial enterprises tend to follow a western-style business dress code comparable to those in any large U.S. city. Tropical weight suits and clothing are appropriate throughout the year and an umbrella is essential during the June to August rainy season.

Many businesses close during the month of August for vacation. Additionally, most businesses and shops close for lunch from 12:30 p.m. until 2:30 – 3:30 p.m. Banks are open until 4:00 PM on weekdays.

### Travel Advisory

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Please refer to the link listed below for the Department of State's current travel advisory on Cote d'Ivoire:

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1094.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1094.html)

### Visa Requirements

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Please refer to the link listed below for the Department of State's current country specific information and travel warning on Cote d'Ivoire:

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/tw/tw\\_915.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_915.html)

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1094.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1094.html)

American citizens do not need a visa to enter or depart Côte d'Ivoire if their visit is for less than ninety days. However, a valid U.S. passport and international health certificate showing current yellow fever and cholera immunizations are required for entry into Côte d'Ivoire. All visitors should ensure Ivoirian officials at port of entry stamp their passport.

A long-term visa (Visa de Long Sejour) is required for non-ECOWAS citizens if the visit will exceed ninety days. Visas are issued by the Embassy of Côte d'Ivoire (3421 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007, Tel: 202-797-0300, fax: 202-387-6381). Airport visas are not available. Visas may be for either single or multiple entries and must be accompanied by a letter of recommendation from the company represented by the traveler. If the visa expires while in Côte d'Ivoire, it is necessary to apply for renewal at the Sureté Nationale.

Residents who travel out of Côte d'Ivoire will need a "visa de sortie et de retour" before they travel. There is a CFAF 20,000 fee for a re-entry visa. They are issued by the Sureté Nationale and can be obtained with a copy of a residence permit. Visitors departing after a visit of less than 90 (verified by the entry stamp in the passport) do not require this visa.

American citizens who expect to work and reside in Côte d'Ivoire for an extended period of time must apply for a residency permit (Certificat de Residence) and a work permit (Carte de Sejour) at the "Direction de la Sureté Nationale," at the Ministry of Interior. The following documents are required in support of a residence and work permit application:

- a. Valid passport
- b. Completed application form
- c. Photos (3) and fingerprints (taken at the Sureté Nationale)
- d. Statement by the applicant regarding his/her activities in Côte d'Ivoire
- e. A fee of approximately USD 85. Your receipt is a permanent record. You will need to show it until the Carte de sejour is delivered. It is also required for the application for an exit visa.

It is also a good idea to register with the U.S. Embassy if the visit will exceed ninety days or if the visitor plans to work in the Côte d'Ivoire.

U.S. Companies that require travel of foreign businesspersons to the United States should be advised that security options are handled via an interagency process. Visa applicants should go to the following links.

State Department Visa Website: <http://travel.state.gov/visa/index.html>

United States Visas.gov: <http://www.unitedstatesvisas.gov/>

U.S Embassy Abidjan website: <http://www.usembassy.gov/abidjan/>

American citizens visiting Cote d'Ivoire should register at the consular section of the U.S. Embassy.

## Telecommunications

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There are over 230,000 telephone subscribers in Côte d'Ivoire, most located in metropolitan Abidjan. Cote d'Ivoire Telecom (<http://www.citelecom.ci/>), the former state owned company sold to France Telecom in 1997, saw its legal monopoly on fixed line operations end in 2004. The de facto monopoly still exists until the government of Cote d'Ivoire's new telecommunications code is approved by the National Assembly. Cote d'Ivoire Telcom services include: mobile telephone (<http://www.orange.ci/>), telex, telegraph, an X.25 based packet switched network for large data communications applications and the French MINITEL directory.

Other added-value service companies are operating in the telecommunications sector, such as Arobase Telecom (<http://www.arobasetelecom.ci/>), MTN (<http://www.mtn.ci/>), MOOV (<http://www.moov.com/>) and Kos.

## Transportation

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### Air

Felix Houphouet Boigny International Airport in Abidjan is the main airport of Côte d'Ivoire. In terms of passenger and freight volume, the airport is one of the largest in the region. In 2005, the airport served more than 775,000 passengers, and handled over 13, 000 tons of freight. International airlines providing service to Abidjan include: Air France, Kenya Airways, SN Brussels, South African Airlines, Ethiopian Airlines, Air Ivoire, Air Senegal, Bellview, Emirates, Royal Air Maroc, Air Mauritania, Air Burkina, Air Algeria and Tunis Air. Aeroport International d'Abidjan (AERIA) is the private management company that runs the Abidjan airport.

The cities in Cote d'Ivoire with commercial flights are Yamoussoukro, Bouaké, Korhogo and San Pedro. None currently receives international flights.

### Roads

Côte d'Ivoire has over 43,000 miles of roads of which 3,750 miles are primary roads and 3,666 miles are paved secondary roads. An ordinary passenger car can access all major cities via paved roads, but some the condition of the road network has deteriorated substantially since the beginning of the political crisis and the concomitant lack of maintenance. Gasoline stations are readily available. Fuel prices are regulated and are approximately \$ 1.20 per litre. There is an external rail line that runs to Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, approximately 1,025 miles from Abidjan. The rail link was closed at the onset of hostilities in 2002, but restarted service in 2003. Service is slow, stops are frequent and the train takes 36 hours to make the full trip.

## Ports

Côte d'Ivoire has two major seaports at Abidjan (<http://www.paa-ci.org/>) and San Pedro (<http://www.sanpedro-portci.com/>). Total freight traffic in 2007 for both ports exceeded 20 million tons. The Port of Abidjan is the most modern in West Africa, and its efficiency and productivity rivals that of any African port.

## Public Transportation

If you plan to spend a week or more in Abidjan, you may wish to hire a car and driver for transportation around the city. Inquire about these services through the concierge at your hotel. It is possible to find English-speaking drivers.

**Buses:** It is not advisable to use the city buses for reasons of safety, security and reliability.

**Taxis:** City taxis (orange-red in color) are reasonably- priced, numerous, and available on the main streets and boulevards in most sections of the city, day or night. All taxis are metered, none are air-conditioned. Rates are doubled (legally) between midnight and 5:00 AM. Some taxi drivers may not speak much French and may not know the city as well as one would expect. Before taking a taxi, check to see if the driver really knows where you want to go. Visitors should note that the charge for service from the airport is a flat rate, and the taxi driver will not use the meter. Check if your hotel has an airport shuttle, as this can be the most convenient means of transport to and from the airport.

## Language

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French is the official language of Côte d'Ivoire. Business correspondence, catalogs and advertising materials prepared in French are essential and readily understood by potential buyers. English is a second language for some people however; do not assume that English is well understood.

## Health

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A valid U.S. passport and international health certificate showing current yellow fever and cholera immunizations are required for entry into Côte d'Ivoire. Otherwise, the traveler risks being subjected to inoculation at the point of entry. Inoculation against meningitis, typhoid, tetanus and diphtheria are also recommended. Malaria prophylaxis is strongly advised. Travelers are also advised to keep their passports on their person at all times. Failure to do so may result in detention at a local police station.

Business visitors to Côte d'Ivoire find the climate hot and humid. It is advisable to take precautions to avoid excessive fluid loss and dehydration from perspiration. Increased intake of non-alcoholic beverages is advised, as well as wearing loose fitting cotton clothing. Excessive sun exposure should be avoided. Côte d'Ivoire is less than five degrees from the equator and the sun is very intense. Sunburn will occur rapidly. Always use sunblock with UVA and UVB protection (minimum SPF 30) when visiting the beach. Also, the ocean beaches near Abidjan are extremely dangerous because of treacherous surf and rip tides. The undertow has swept good swimmers out to sea. Pools at the large hotels are filtered, cleaned regularly, and very safe to swim in.

Malaria prophylaxis is strongly recommended in all regions of Côte d'Ivoire, including the cities, and all countries of West Africa. Mefloquine (Lariam) weekly or doxycycline daily is the most effective. At least two doses of mefloquine should be taken prior to arrival in Côte d'Ivoire. Doxycycline may be started the day prior to arrival. Prophylactic medications should be taken for four weeks after departure. Another option for malaria prophylaxis is a newer drug called Malarone. It is expensive and must be taken daily, starting one day before arrival but has the advantage of only needing to be continued for one week after departure. No matter which option is selected it should be combined with use of insect repellents during evening hours. For further information on malaria prophylaxis, visit the CDC website (<http://www.cdc.gov>)

Water and ice at the major hotels (Hotel Ivoire, Hotel Sofitel, Hotel Tiama, Novotel and Golf Hotel) are considered safe for consumption since these hotels have their own purification plants. Water and ice served in other establishments should be avoided. (Freezing water into ice cubes is not sufficient to kill ameba and giardia parasites) Bottled water (AWA and Olgane are the most popular locally bottled brands) is widely available and safe to drink. Uncooked vegetables and salads may be eaten if they have been soaked in a dilute solution of Clorox (one tablespoon in a gallon of water) or potassium permanganate for 15 minutes. Meat should always be thoroughly cooked. Fresh fish and shrimp are generally safe. Pasteurized milk and milk products from sealed cartons or bottles are safe to consume, as are imported cheeses, butter, cream, and ice cream that has been adequately stored.

Sexually transmitted diseases have a high prevalence in the local population. It has been estimated that as much as 10% of the adult population may be infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS (<http://abidjan.usembassy.gov/pepfar.html>). Secondary infections, such as tuberculosis, are on the rise. Tuberculosis skin tests should be done after long stays in Côte d'Ivoire.

There are a large number of "polycliniques" in Abidjan, the largest and probably best being the Polyclinique Internationale de Sainte Anne Marie (PISAM). PISAM is located between the downtown district, Plateau, and the Hotel Ivoire in Cocody. It has a 24-hour emergency room, a five-bed intensive care unit, CT scanner, and six sterile operating suites. There is a large staff of medical specialists affiliated with the hospital, most of whom have had some medical training in Western Europe or North America. Radiology equipment was provided by a supplier from the U.S. on an Ex-Im bank insurance guarantee program.

Unfortunately, while there are ambulances that would eventually respond to a medical emergency including a motor vehicle accident, the quality of pre-hospital emergency

care is poor. Injuries sustained in a motor vehicle accident represent your greatest health risk while staying in Abidjan.

Local pharmacies are well stocked with medications manufactured primarily in Europe. Prices of medications are generally cheaper than in the United States. However, supplies sometime vary and it is strongly recommended you bring a good supply of any medications you take regularly.

#### **Local Time, Business Hours, and Holidays**

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January 1	New Year's Day
March 24	Easter Monday
May 1	Labor Day/Ascension Day
May 12	Pentecost Monday
August 7	Independence Day
August 15	Assumption Day
October	Day after the Night of Destiny**
October	End of the holy month of Ramadan/Muslim year**
November 1	All Saint's Day
November 15	National Peace Day
December	Tabaski**
December 25	Christmas Day

\*\*Business travelers should verify the dates of these holidays prior to undertaking their trip. These holidays vary from country to country and depend on the sighting of the moon. Business establishments are normally closed on public holidays in Côte d'Ivoire.

#### **Temporary Entry of Materials and Personal Belongings**

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Free entry is permitted of apparel and personal effects that are proved to have been in personal or household used by the traveler and are not for sale, and of instruments and tools for professional use. No customs and entry duty is required for visitors carrying portable computers and laptops and cellular telephones for their own use.

Cellular telephones work under the GSM 900 standard. Users of GSM cellular telephones only need a connection to the existing local network, which can be done inexpensively with prepaid cellular cards. U.S. cellular telephones without international roaming agreements will not work in Cote d'Ivoire. It is advisable to check with your cell phone service provider and either Orange (<http://www.orange.ci>) MTN (<http://www.mtn.ci/>), MOOV (<http://www.moov.com/>) or Kos regarding roaming.

All other goods including tobacco and alcoholic beverages, whether imported for personal use or sale, including goods intended for residents of the Côte d'Ivoire are subject to duty.

Travelers deciding to import any vehicle (including trailers or cycles) or other goods intended for their use, convenience or comfort, but not for consumption, must deposit at the time and place of importation a sum equal to the duty that would be imposed. Simultaneously, a claim for temporary exemption should be presented. The vehicle or goods must then be exported at the end of the stipulated period. These conditions also apply to articles imported for exhibition or demonstration and subsequent re-export. If the prescribed conditions are not met, the visitor will be liable for the full duty of the vehicle or goods imported. A guarantee may be made by an authorized organization, however, in which case no deposit is required. The organization thereby assumes the liability for the duty if the vehicle or goods are not re-exported within the prescribed period.

## Web Resources

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The Department of State provides travel information to all countries, including Cote d'Ivoire:

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel\\_1744.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html)  
[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1094.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1094.html)  
<http://travel.state.gov/visa/index.html>  
<http://www.unitedstatesvisas.gov/>

- U.S. Embassy in Abidjan website: <http://abidjan.usembassy.gov/>

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## Chapter 9: Contacts, Market Research, and Trade Events

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- [Market Research](#)
- [Trade Events](#)

### Contacts

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#### U.S. Embassy contacts

U.S. Embassy - Abidjan  
Department of State  
Washington, D.C. 20521-2010  
Tel: (225) 22-49-40-00  
Fax: (225) 22-49-43-23  
Website: <http://abidjan.usembassy.gov/>  
Local mailing address is:  
Ambassade des Etats-Unis d'Amérique  
01 B.P. 1712 Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire

Ambassador: Wanda Nesbitt  
Deputy Chief of Mission: Cynthia Akuetteh  
Political Economic Chief Counselor: Silvia Eiriz  
Economic Officer: Ervin Massinga

Regional Senior Commercial Officer: Stephen Morrison  
U.S. Embassy - Dakar, Senegal  
Tel: 221-823-4296 ext. 3202  
Fax: 221-842-9821  
Email: [morrisonks@state.gov](mailto:morrisonks@state.gov)

#### Trade Associations/Chambers of Commerce

American Chamber of Commerce of the Côte d'Ivoire (AMCHAM)  
06 BP 1896 Abidjan 06  
Ms. Deborah Gray, President  
Tel:/Fax: (225) 22-42-68-69  
[amcham@afnet.net](mailto:amcham@afnet.net)

Chambre de Commerce et de l'Industrie de Côte d'Ivoire, (CCI-CI)  
(Ivoirian Chamber of Commerce and Industry)  
M. Jean-Louis Billon, President  
6, avenue Joseph Anoma - Plateau  
01 B.P. 1399 Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire  
Tel: (225) 20-33-16-00  
Fax: (225) 20-32-39-42  
<http://www.chamco-ci.org>

Centre de Promotion des Investissements de Côte d'Ivoire (CEPICI)  
M. Tchetché N'Guessan, Directeur General  
CCIA Building (5th floor), Plateau  
01 B.P. V 152, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire  
Tel: (225) 20-21-40-70  
Fax: (225) 20-21-40-71  
<http://www.cepici.ci/>

Confederation Generale des Entreprises de Cote d'Ivoire (CGECI)  
M. Jean Kacou Diagou, President  
Immeuble Sidam, (12eme etage) - Abidjan Plateau  
01 B.P. 8666 Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire  
Tel: (225) 20-22-50-08  
Fax: (225) 20-22-50-09  
[cnpi@aviso.ci](mailto:cnpi@aviso.ci)

Federation Nationale des Industries et Services de Côte d'Ivoire (FNIS-CI)  
M. Joseph Desire Biley, President  
01 BP 1340 Abidjan 01, Cote d'Ivoire  
Immeuble les Harmonies, 1er etage  
Tél.: (225) 20-31-90-70/20-21-59-30  
Fax: (225) 20-21-72-56/53-52  
[fnisci@fnisci.net](mailto:fnisci@fnisci.net)  
[infos@fnisci.net](mailto:infos@fnisci.net)  
<http://www.fnisci.net>

Association pour la Promotion des Exportations de Côte d'Ivoire, APEX-CI  
M. Guy M'Bengue, General Manager  
M. Gerard Amangoua, Directeur du Developpement  
Immeuble CCIA, 3rd Floor, Abidjan-Plateau  
01 B.P. Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire  
Tel.: (225) 20 31 57 00  
Fax: (225) 20 21 75 76  
E-mail: [info@apex.ci](mailto:info@apex.ci)  
<http://www.apexci.org>

Cour d'Arbitrage de Côte d'Ivoire (CACI)  
M. M. Eloi Ako, General Secretary  
203 Poste Entreprise Abidjan Cedex  
Tel: (225) 20-33-16-00  
Fax: (225) 20-22- 43-25  
[caciadr@yahoo.fr](mailto:caciadr@yahoo.fr)

Bureau National d'Etudes et de Developpement (BNETD)  
M. Ahoua Don Mello, General Manager  
Bd Hassan II - Cocody, 04 BP 945 Abidjan 04 - Côte d'Ivoire  
Tél (225) 22 44 28 05, 22 48 34 00 / 35 00 / 36 00 / 37 00  
Fax (225) 22 44 56 66  
[communication@bnetd.ci](mailto:communication@bnetd.ci)  
<http://www.bnetd.ci>



### Ivoirian Publicity/Marketing Research Firms

MCCANN-ERICKSON CÔTE D'IVOIRE  
(Subsidiary of the Interpublic Group of Companies)  
M. Maurice Toure, General Manager  
Cocody CHU Extension, Quartier Mermoz  
01 B.P. 3420 Abidjan 01  
Tel: (225) 22-40-17-17  
Fax: (225) 22-48-94-18/19  
[Nguessan\\_hermance@ci-mccann.com](mailto:Nguessan_hermance@ci-mccann.com)  
<http://www.mccann.com>

Ocean Ogilvy Agence Conseil,  
Martine Coffi-Studer, General Manager  
Serge Bouah, Deputy General Manager  
Edouard N'Go, Finance Manager  
01 B.P. 7759 Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire  
Tel: (225) 22-48-78-58  
Fax: (225) 22-48-78-60/ (225) 22-40-41-70  
[cotedivoire@oceanogilvy.com](mailto:cotedivoire@oceanogilvy.com)  
[www.oceanogilvy.com](http://www.oceanogilvy.com)

Voodoo Communication  
M. Fabrice Fawenon, Directeur  
06 BP 2095 Abidjan 06  
Tel. (225) 22-41-48-38  
Fax. (225) 22-41-48-35  
[infos@voodoo-com.net](mailto:infos@voodoo-com.net)

### Contact information for advertising in radio and TV

TV/Radio:

RTI-PUBLICITE  
Television Chaines 1 and 2  
08 BP 883 Abidjan 08  
Ms. Francois Kouakou, Marketing Manager  
Tel: (225) 22-44-01-45/ (225) 22-44-35-59  
Fax: (225) 22-44-78-23/44-03  
[Info.rti@rti.ci](mailto:Info.rti@rti.ci)  
<http://www.rti.ci>

CANAL+ HORIZONS  
Mme Françoise Leguennou Remarck, President Directeur General  
01 B.P. 1132 Abidjan 01  
Tel: (225) 20-31-67-67/ 20-31-99-99  
Fax: (225) 20-22-72-22  
[abonne@canalhorizons.ci](mailto:abonne@canalhorizons.ci)

### Daily Papers

#### FRATERNITE-MATIN

Boulevard du General de Gaulle (220 Logements), Adjame  
01 B.P. 1807, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire

Tel: (225) 20-37-06-66

Fax: (225) 20-37-25-45

[contact@fratmat.net](mailto:contact@fratmat.net)

[www.fratmat.net](http://www.fratmat.net)

#### NOTRE VOIE

Cocody les II Plateaux  
06 B.P. 2868 Abidjan 06

Tel: (225) 22-42-63-28

Fax: (225) 22-42-63-32

[gnh@africaonline.co.ci](mailto:gnh@africaonline.co.ci)

#### LE JOUR

Abidjan II Plateaux  
25 B.P. 1083 Abidjan 25

Tel: (225) 22-41-94-33

Fax: (225) 20-21-95-80

[quotidienlejour@yahoo.fr](mailto:quotidienlejour@yahoo.fr)

<http://www.lejourplus.com>

#### LE PATRIOTE

23, rue Paul Langevin, Zone 4C, Abidjan

22 B.P. 509 Abidjan 22, Côte d'Ivoire

Tel: (225) 21-21-19-45 / 21-21-19-46 / 21-21-19-47/07-01-17-16

Fax: (225) 21-35-11-83

[info@lepatriote.net](mailto:info@lepatriote.net)

<http://lepatriote.net>

#### Commercial Banks and Financial Services Institutions in Côte d'Ivoire

##### Citibank

M. Jamal Hussein Director General

Imm. Botreau Roussel, 28 Av. Delafosse, 01 BP 3698 - Abidjan 01

Tel: (225) 20-21-46-10

Fax: (225) 20 21 76 85

<http://www.citibank.com>

##### ECOBANK CI

M. Martin Djedjef, Directeur General

Av. Terrasson de Fougères, Imm. Alliance

01 BP 4107 - Abidjan 01

Tel: (225) 20-21-10-41

Fax: (225) 20-21-88-16

[ecobankci@ecobank.com](mailto:ecobankci@ecobank.com)

<http://www.ecobank.com>

BIAO-CI - Banque Internationale pour l'Afrique Occidentale

8-10 Av. Joseph Anoma,  
01 BP 1274 Abidjan 01 – Cote d'Ivoire  
Tel: (225) 20-20-07-20  
Fax: (225) 20-32-71-32  
[biaoscs@africaonline.co.ci](mailto:biaoscs@africaonline.co.ci)  
<http://www.biao.co.ci>

Banque Internationale pour le Commerce et l'Industrie de la Côte d'Ivoire (BICICI)  
M. Ange Koffy, CEO  
Avenue Franchet d'Esperey  
01 B.P. 1298 Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire  
Tel: (225) 20-20-16-00 or 20-16-02  
Fax: (225) 20-20-17-00  
[www.bicici.org](http://www.bicici.org)

Société Generale de Banques en Côte d'Ivoire (SGBCI)  
M. Labadens Bernard, Administrator-General Manager  
01 B.P. 1355, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire  
Tel: (225) 20-20-12-34/ 20-20-13-18  
Fax: (225) 20-20-14-92  
[Direction.sgbci@socgen.com](mailto:Direction.sgbci@socgen.com)  
<http://www.socgen.com>

Société Ivoirienne de Banque (S.I.B.)  
M. Jacques du Vignaud Administrator - General Manager  
34, Bd de la République - Immeuble ALPHA 2000  
01 B.P. 1300 Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire  
Tel: (225) 20-20-00-00 or 20-20-00-80  
Fax: (225) 20-20-01-19  
[info@sib.ci](mailto:info@sib.ci)  
<http://www.sib.ci>

Standard Chartered Bank  
17 BP 1141 Abidjan 17. Cote d'Ivoire  
Tel. (225) 20-30-32-00  
Fax: (225) 20-30-32-11  
[Prisca.mattey@ci.standardchartered.com](mailto:Prisca.mattey@ci.standardchartered.com)  
<http://www.standardchartered.com>

Versus Bank  
Immeuble CRRAE-UMOA – Boulevard Botreau Roussel, Derrière la BCEAO  
01 BP 1874 Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire  
Tel: (225) 20-25-60-60 /90  
Fax: (225) 20 25 60 99  
[infos@versusbank.com](mailto:infos@versusbank.com)  
<http://www.versusbank.com>

#### Shipping Companies

Port Autonome d'Abidjan / Abidjan port

M. Marcel Gossio, General Manager  
Abidjan - BP V85  
Tel: (225) 21 23 80 00  
Fax. : (225) 21 23 80 80  
[info@paa-ci.org](mailto:info@paa-ci.org)  
<http://www.paa-ci.org>

#### Packing-Service International

G30, rue des majorettes  
07 BP 66 Abidjan 07  
Tel. (225) 21-25-27-17  
Fax: (225) 21-25-28-13  
[general@packingservices.com](mailto:general@packingservices.com)  
<http://www.packingsservices.com>

DIOT  
Mr. Michel Bley Arnondo  
Km 7 Blvd Marseille  
01 BP 15 Abidjan 01  
Tel: (225) 21-27-73-70  
Fax: (225) 21-27-80-77  
[setdiot@aviso.ci](mailto:setdiot@aviso.ci)

SDV-SAGA CI  
Mr. Lionel Labarre  
Rue du terminal a conteneurs, Zone portuaire de Vridi  
01 BP 1727 Abidjan 01, Cote d'Ivoire  
Tel: (225) 21-22-00-00  
Fax: (225) 21-25-36-15  
<http://www.saga.fr>

Transitex International  
M. Raymond N'Guessan, General Manager  
Zone 2, Blvd 50 VGE  
27 BP 348 Abidjan 27, Cote d'Ivoire  
Tel.: (225) 21-21-36-10  
Fax: (225) 21-21-36-16  
[transitex@aviso.ci](mailto:transitex@aviso.ci)

#### Multilateral Financial Institutions in Côte d'Ivoire

The World Bank  
Rue Jacques Aka, Cocody  
01 B.P. 1850, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire  
Tel: (225) 22-400-400  
Fax: (225) 22-400-416  
<http://worldbank.org>

The International Monetary Fund  
<http://www.imf.org>

## 2. Washington, D.C. Contacts for Côte d'Ivoire

U.S. Department of Commerce: <http://www.export.gov>

U.S. Department of Agriculture: <http://www.usda.gov>

U.S. Agency for International Development: <http://www.usaid.gov>

U.S. Export-Import Bank: <http://www.exim.gov>

Overseas Private Investment Corporation: <http://www.opic.gov>

U.S. Trade and Development Agency: <http://www.tda.gov>

### Market Research

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To view market research reports produced by the U.S. Commercial Service please go to the following website: <http://www.export.gov/marketresearch.html> and click on Country and Industry Market Reports.

Please note that these reports are only available to U.S. citizens and U.S. companies. Registration to the site is required, but free of charge.

### Trade Events

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Please click on the links below for information on upcoming trade events.

<http://www.export.gov/tradeevents.html>

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## Chapter 10: Guide to Our Services

The U.S. Commercial Service offers customized solutions to help your business enter and succeed in markets worldwide. Our global network of trade specialists will work one-on-one with you through every step of the exporting process, helping you to:

- Target the best markets with our world-class research
- Promote your products and services to qualified buyers
- Meet the best distributors and agents for your products and services
- Overcome potential challenges or trade barriers

For more information on the services the U.S. Commercial Service offers U.S. businesses, please click on the link below.

(Insert link to Products and Services section of local buyusa.gov website here.)

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U.S. exporters seeking general export information/assistance or country-specific commercial information should consult with their nearest **Export Assistance Center** or the **U.S. Department of Commerce's Trade Information Center** at **(800) USA-TRADE**, or go to the following website: <http://www.export.gov>

To the best of our knowledge, the information contained in this report is accurate as of the date published. However, **The Department of Commerce** does not take responsibility for actions readers may take based on the information contained herein. Readers should always conduct their own due diligence before entering into business ventures or other commercial arrangements. **The Department of Commerce** can assist companies in these endeavors.